

The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium

TEXTS AND IMAGES

Edited by Leslie Brubaker and Mary B. Cunningham



An **Ashgate** Book

BIRMINGHAM BYZANTINE AND OTTOMAN STUDIES

THE CULT OF THE MOTHER OF GOD IN BYZANTIUM

To Averil Cameron who first problematised the Byzantine cult of the Virgin, and to Judith Herrin, who brought gender studies to Byzantium.

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Texts and Images

Edited by Leslie Brubaker and Mary B. Cunningham

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List of Abbreviations

AASS	<i>Acta sanctorum</i> , 71 vols. (Paris, 1863–1940)
ACO	<i>Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum</i> , 4 vols. (Berlin– Leipzig, 1922–74)
<i>AnalBoll</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
ARAM	Society for Syro–Mesopotamian International Conference (Oxford)
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
BBTT	Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations
BCA	Bibliothèque des cahiers archéologiques
BF	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen</i>
BHG	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca</i> , ed. F. Halkin (3 rd ed., Brussels, 1957)
BMGS	<i>Bulletin of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
BZ	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CahArch</i>	<i>Cahiers Archéologiques</i>
CChr, ser.gr	Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca
CChr, ser.lat	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CPG	<i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i> , ed. M. Geerard, 3 vols (Turnhout, 1974–83)
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
DACL	<i>Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</i>
DChAE	<i>Deltion tes Christianikes Archaialogikes Hetaireias</i>
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
EB	<i>Études byzantines</i>
EEBS	<i>Epeteris Hetaireias Byzantinon Spoudon</i>
EO	<i>Échos d'Orient</i>
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte (Leipzig, 1897–)
GOTHr	<i>Greek Orthodox Theological Review</i>
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority

IRAIK	<i>Izvestija Russkogo Archeologičeskogo Instituta v Konstantinopole</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JÖB	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LXX	The Septuagint
M	<i>Mishnah</i>
Mansi	G.D. Mansi, <i>Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio</i> (53 vols in 58 parts, Paris–Leipzig, 1901–27)
ODB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> , 3 vols., eds A. Kazhdan et al. (Oxford, 1991)
OCA	<i>Orientalia Christiana Analecta</i>
OCP	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
pl.	plate
PO	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
QDAP	<i>Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine</i>
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für antike und Christentum</i> (Stuttgart, 1950–)
REB	<i>Revue des Études Byzantines</i>
RHE	<i>Revue d'Histoire Écclésiastique</i>
ROC	<i>Revue de l'Orient Chrétien</i>
RSBN	<i>Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici</i>
SC	<i>Sources chrétiennes</i>
SP	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
ST	<i>Studi e Testi</i>
SubsHag	<i>Subsidia Hagiographica</i>
SVTHQ	<i>St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i>
TM	<i>Travaux et Mémoires</i>
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool University Press)
VC	<i>Vigilia Christianae</i>
VV	<i>Vizantijskij Vremennik</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palaestina-Vereins</i>
ZRVI	<i>Zbornik radova Vizantološkog Instituta</i>

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Preface

The papers in this volume were mostly delivered at a conference held in August 2006, as the concluding segment of a research project sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) on 'The Mother of God in Byzantium: Relics, Icons, and Texts'. Under these auspices, Mary Cunningham assessed the corpus of eighth- and ninth-century homilies on the Virgin Mary, translating and providing commentaries on those that she believes authentic. The results of this work appeared in her book, *Wider Than Heaven: Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008). Mary also hopes to publish a larger study in which these works will be contextualised, mainly in literary and theological terms, in the future. We are also currently working on a joint book that will juxtapose literary with visual aspects of the Virgin's cult, focusing especially on the intersection between images of the Theotokos and the long-standing cult of relics during the eighth and ninth centuries.

My own initial concerns were focused on the confused position of the Theotokos in later Byzantine reports about what we now call iconoclasm ('iconomachy', the image struggle, to the Byzantines). As all Byzantinists know, the early seals of Leo III followed established imperial tradition and depicted the Virgin Mary.¹ And, whatever his later activities may have been, Leo is not normally accused of denying the importance of the Virgin and her relics. Leo's son, Constantine V, however, is sometimes portrayed in later sources as being opposed to both. Theophanes the Confessor, who wrote in the early ninth century, treated Leo as an orthodox and pious ruler, but accused Constantine V of renouncing the divinity of Christ and arguing that Mary was not the Mother of God.² So far as we can tell, this was a (probably deliberate) misrepresentation, but it is worth examining its inspiration. This seems to

¹ See O. Zacos and A. Vegliery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* (Basel, 1972), nos. 23, 25, 27–33 and, for the seal of the later 'iconoclast' emperor Leo V and his son Constantine bearing an image of the Virgin, see no. 48.

² Theophanes, *Chronicle* 415.24–30; trans. C. Mango and R. Scott, eds, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History, A.D. 284–813* (Oxford, 1997), 576.

have been Constantine's *Questions (Peuseis)*, the core ideas of which were soon afterwards elaborated in the definition (*horos*) of the iconoclast Council of 754.³ This text mooted the basic iconoclast premise that an image of Christ shows only his human nature, and thereby denies his divinity; it then targeted images of the Virgin, saints, prophets and apostles. The central argument here was that those who believed that 'simple mortals' (like Mary) could be represented – since there was not a problem with conflating the human and divine – were ill-advised. Images of the Virgin Mary were unnecessary, and an insult to her memory, for she lived eternally beside God.⁴ That is to say, Mary's death and assumption into heaven had received widespread acceptance by the Church from about the late sixth century onward. But although the iconoclasts rejected images of the Virgin, they did not refuse to honour her; if anything, Mary's status increased.⁵ As Paul Magdalino has noted, the final session of the iconoclast council of 754 was held at Blachernai – a site firmly associated with the Theotokos – which scarcely suggests a lack of reverence to the Virgin Mary.⁶ The impact of 'iconoclasm' on the ways in which the Byzantines thought about the Theotokos was most pronounced after the debate was over, when the victorious pro-image faction apparently realised that their trump card – the visibility of the human Christ, which meant that portraits of Jesus confirmed the validity of the Incarnation (and iconoclasts, by saying that Christ could not be represented, were thereby denying the Incarnation) – meant that an emphasis on the Virgin as Christ's human mother underscored their main point in a dramatic and – as the so-called nuclear family became increasingly the norm in the ninth century – socially appropriate way. The epithet *meter theou* ('Mother of God') first appears in the ninth century, and coincides with imagery stressing the Virgin's emotional interaction with her son.⁷ As Stephen Shoemaker demonstrates in this volume,⁸ Mary's emotional life was not invented *sui generis* in the wake of iconoclasm, but her new role in

³ Mansi xiii, 245E–252B; S. Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm During the Reign of Constantine V, with Particular Attention to the Oriental Sources*, CSCO 384, Subsidia 52 (Louvain, 1977), 74; T. Krannich, C. Schubert and C. Sode, *Die ikonokastische Synode von Hiereia 754. Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar ihres Horos, nebst einme Beitrag zur Epistula ad Constantiam des Eusebius von Cäesarea von Annette Stockhausen*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 15 (Tübingen, 2002), 16–20.

⁴ Mansi xiii, 272B–277D; Gero, *Constantine V*, 78–80; D.J. Sahas, *Icon and Logos. Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm. An Annotated Translation of the Sixth Session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council* (Toronto, 1986), 99–105.

⁵ Mansi xiii, 345A–B.

⁶ P. Magdalino, 'L'Église du Phare et les reliques de la passion à Constantinople (VII^e/VIII^e – XIII^e siècles)', in J. Durand and B. Flusin, eds, *Byzance et les reliques du Christ* (Paris, 2004), 21.

⁷ See I. Kalavrezou, 'Images of the mother: when the Virgin Mary became meter theou', *DOP* 44 (1990), 165–72, and Niki Tsironis, 'Emotion and the senses in Marian homilies of the Middle Byzantine period', below, 179–96.

⁸ See S. Shoemaker, 'A mother's passion: Mary's role in the Crucifixion and Resurrection in the earliest Life of the Virgin and its influence on George of Nikomedeia's Passion homilies', below, 53–67.

Orthodox dogma meant that it took on an increased importance after 843, and profoundly affected Marian verbal and visual imagery thereafter.

This puts our research into a broader context, and that was also the aim of the conference recorded here. The conference papers began by looking at fifth- and sixth-century antecedents for the cult of the Theotokos in the Holy Land and in Constantinople, then turned to its acceleration and diffusion, with particular emphasis on the development of feast-days, epithets, relics and icons. Our aim was to develop and expand the important work gathered at the Athens conference of 2001, published in M. Vassilaki, *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), as well as that of the conference held that same year in Chester, published in R.N. Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, Studies in Church History 39 (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2004). This aim was realised: the papers published here open up new perspectives on virtually all facets of Mariological study, from the archaeological and visual to the textual and performative.

As we discussed drafts of the contributions that follow with their authors, two issues recurred repeatedly. First, despite the huge amount that has been published on the Mother of God over the past decade, there remain large areas of Marian study that remain unproblematized. For example, although there is general (though not universal) agreement that the 'cult' of the Virgin occurred much later than was once believed – there is an increasing consensus that the ninth or tenth century seems more likely than the fifth or sixth – it remains the case that there are numerous pre-iconoclast monuments to and portraits of the Virgin, and their character is uncertain: were they simply commemorative, did they respond to local cults, or did Mary play some as yet unexplored role? Second, while we are increasingly aware of why the Byzantines venerated the Virgin in particular ways, the registers or levels of that veneration remain unstudied: why were particular groups, at particular times or in particular places (for example, the monks at Mount Athos) drawn to the Mother of God? How does veneration of the Virgin intersect with the hierarchies of gender and status? The papers in this volume have brought us closer to responding to some of these issues, and both Mary and I would like to thank our contributors for pushing Marian studies beyond its sometimes comfortable boundaries; we are also grateful for their patience with us as we bombarded them with questions along the way.

A few remarks about editorial practices that we have adopted in this volume are in order here. As regards the spelling of names, we have chosen to use Greek rather than Latin transliterations, except when a name is more commonly used in its anglicised form, as in 'John Chrysostom' or 'Constantine V'. In every chapter except for that of Margaret Barker, we have cited the Old Testament using Septuagint rather than Hebrew numberings (as in the case of the Psalms especially). There is not complete consistency throughout the volume in the choice to use the Greek font or transliterations when citing Greek texts or words. The various contributors have made different choices

with respect to this problem; we hope nevertheless that there is consistency within their separate chapters.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank the AHRC for funding both our research and the conference that generated this volume, the British Academy for a generous conference grant, and John Smedley at Ashgate for his usual patience and good humour. Emily Corran spent one summer helping with the editing of the papers. In addition, I thank my past and present 'gender' postgraduates – Eve Davies, Andriani Georgiou, Polyvios Konis, Kallirroé Lindardou, Eirini Panou – and, as always, my husband Chris Wickham.

Leslie Brubaker

Introduction

The Mother of God in Byzantium: Relics, Icons, Texts

Averil Cameron

The last few years have seen a remarkable surge of interest in the subject of the cult of the Virgin in late antiquity and Byzantium, and it shows no sign of abating. An important milestone was certainly the exhibition of icons of the Mother of God held at the Benaki Museum in Athens in 2000, with the rich catalogue edited by Maria Vassilaki, containing many essays by specialist scholars as well as entries on the objects in the exhibition, and the subsequent conference volume also edited by her.¹ These two volumes brought together the work of historians and art historians alike, and this has been a major feature in other recent publications. Another milestone was the publication of Nicholas Conostas's article, 'Weaving the body of God', in 1995,² which opened many eyes to the possibilities of studying the language and imagery of Marian homilies, followed by his book on the homilies of Proklos of Constantinople.³ Brian Daley's modest translation and commentary on some early Byzantine Marian homilies is a mine of information on some of the still mysterious homilies of the seventh and eighth centuries.⁴ Mary Cunningham has since published a supplementary volume of translations, with commentary, on the eighth-century festal sermons.⁵ Leena Mari Peltomaa's redating of the *Akathistos Hymn* to the fifth century required a real mental adjustment to those

¹ M Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God, Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens and Milan, 2000); *eadem, Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2004).

² N. Conostas, 'Weaving the body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the Theotokos and the loom of the flesh', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3.2 (1995), 169–94.

³ N. Conostas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity. Homilies 1–3, Texts and Translations* (Leiden, 2003).

⁴ B.E. Daley, S.J., *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood NY, 1998); see also the Syriac homilies, e.g. M. Hanbury, trans., *Jacob of Serug. On the Mother of God*, with introduction by S. Brock (Crestwood NY, 1998).

⁵ M.B. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven: Eighth-Century Byzantine Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood NY, 2008).

of us who had seen it as at least sixth century – and her argument is still being assimilated.⁶ Another collective volume with several papers on the early period was *The Church and Mary*, published in 2004, and based on papers originally given in 2001 and 2002.⁷ The supposed role of the Empress Pulcheria as the champion of the cult of Mary has attracted both support and scepticism, the latter in the light of a growing realisation of the extraordinary extent to which later Byzantine narratives retrojected the realities of their own day back into this early period.⁸ We have also had Stephen Shoemaker's important book on the early legends of the Dormition (Koimesis) and Assumption.⁹ Archaeology has also contributed: a fifth-century church was discovered in 1992 near Mar Elias, south of Ramat Rahel and south of Jerusalem, and identified as having built at the site of the rock known as the Kathisma, or 'seat' of the Virgin, in 1997; it has also been argued that another church of Mary in the Wadi Kidron beside the Garden of Gethsemane was erected at the site believed to mark Mary's tomb.¹⁰

Both the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Oxford Patristic Conferences (2003 and 2007) included workshops on Mary, and there have been recent research projects on the Theotokos not only in Birmingham but also in Vienna and Australia. Most obviously, there have also been important publications dealing with icons of the Virgin, or on the Virgin's 'relics' (not real relics of course), and the texts associated with them from Constantinople,¹¹ as well as on the wonder-working Marian icons recorded in post-iconoclastic literature like the late ninth-century *Letter of the Three Patriarchs*.¹² From the point of view of

⁶ L.M. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn* (Leiden, 2001); the *Akathistos Hymn* was the source of a wealth of iconographic material in later Byzantine art, and a repository of Marian images later to become classic. Doubts have been expressed about Peltomaa's early dating by e.g. N. Constas, in *SVThQ* 49.3 (2005), 355–8 and B.V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park PA, 2006), 15–16.

⁷ R.N. Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, Studies in Church History 39 (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester NY, 2004); see Averil Cameron, 'The cult of the Virgin in late antiquity: religious development and myth-making', *ibid.*, 1–21; M.B. Cunningham, 'The meeting of the old and the new: the typology of Mary the Theotokos in Byzantine homilies and hymns', *ibid.*, 52–62; J. Baun, 'Discussing Mary's humanity in medieval Byzantium', *ibid.*, 63–72; K. Linardou, 'The couch of Solomon, a monk, a Byzantine lady and the Song of Songs', *ibid.*, 73–85.

⁸ Support: Kate Cooper, 'Empress and *Theotokos*: gender and patronage in the Christological controversy', *ibid.*, 39–51; scepticism: R.M. Price, 'Marian piety and the Nestorian controversy', *ibid.*, 31–8; Cameron, 'Cult of the Virgin', 9–13; Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, 15.

⁹ S.J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford, 2002); see also *idem*, 'Death and the maiden: the early history of the Dormition and Assumption apocrypha', *SVThQ* 50 (2006), 59–97.

¹⁰ See, on both, Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions*, 79–98, 98–107, with bibliography; see however the chapter by R. Avner in this volume.

¹¹ For instance A.-M. Weyl Carr, 'Threads of authority: the Virgin Mary's veil in the Middle Ages', in S. Gordon, ed., *Robes and Honor. The Medieval World of Investiture* (New York, 2001), 59–94.

¹² J. Chrysostomides, E. Harvalia-Crook and C. Dendrinos, eds, *The Letter of the*

theology as well as art history Athanassios Semoglou has traced the gradually developing association of the Theotokos in Byzantium with the theme of the Ascension,¹³ while Bissera Pentcheva has argued for a gradual and late development of the processional liturgies of Marian icons in Constantinople.¹⁴

Why has the subject of the Theotokos become so much in vogue?¹⁵ When I think of the material available when I first wrote on the subject in the 1970s, this seems an intriguing question.

Writing of the period after Chalcedon, Brian Daley has memorably said that ‘the figure of Mary emerged like a comet in Christian devotion and liturgical celebration throughout the world’.¹⁶ One might argue there has been a similar explosion in modern scholarship in the last decade or so. A possible explanation might be that the subject of the Theotokos appeals to every kind of Byzantinist, whether art historian, liturgist, historian or editor of texts. It also lends itself to, or partakes in, a very wide range of other current issues, including, for example, the ever-present questions relating to the transition from late antiquity to Byzantium. Thus it seems striking that many recent publications on the Theotokos deal with the formative period of Byzantium, from late antiquity to the post-iconoclastic period, as though the figure of the Theotokos was a kind of litmus test for change. Other currently popular topics to which the figure of the Theotokos is highly relevant include that of narrative, especially as it relates to the consideration of apocryphal stories and the embroidery of sparse scriptural detail. The growth of pilgrimage, the development of specific localised cults, the relation between official and popular religion, and between Christological doctrine, private piety and liturgical development, the rise and relation of icons and relics, and indeed questions about gender all lend themselves well to studies which focus on the Theotokos. The sheer capaciousness of the theme of the Theotokos is surely one of the main reasons for its fascination – she can be, and has been, all things to everyone. That is of course why it is hard to arrive at convincing general theories, but also why there is the space for so many excellent new studies. Indeed, we can look forward to more, since as usual in Byzantine matters, so many of the most relevant texts have not been, or are only now being, studied in detail.

One of the problems in understanding the early growth of attention to the Theotokos is the apparent gap between the second-century apocryphal writing known as the *Protevangelion of James*¹⁷ – the text which, together with

Three Patriarchs to the Emperor Theophilus and Related Texts (Camberley, 1997).

¹³ A. Semoglou, *Le voyage outre tombe de la Vierge dans l'art byzantin. De la descente aux enfers à la montée au ciel* (Thessalonike, 2003).

¹⁴ Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, focusing closely on the question of icon processions rather than on the broader issue of the cult of the Theotokos.

¹⁵ See also the ongoing work of Sarah Jane Boss at the Centre for Marian Studies (currently located at Roehampton University), including the recent collaborative volume of essays, S.J. Boss, ed., *Mary. The Complete Resource* (London and New York, 2007).

¹⁶ Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary*, 6.

¹⁷ C. Tischendorf, ed., *Evangelia Apocrypha* (Leipzig, 1876, repr. 1966); E.

the *Akathistos Hymn*, forms the basis of so much later imagining about the Virgin in visual art, homiletic and hymnography – and the beginnings of real attention to the Virgin in our sources from the late fourth, and particularly the fifth century onwards. This is a problem which demands more attention, in that the *Protevangelion* seems so developed for its date, and yet in a sense so isolated. It needs to be set in the broader context of apocryphal writings of a similar period, which have also been attracting a very substantial amount of recent scholarship, and its similarities and differences studied in more detail. It is also interesting to note that the second- and third-century apocryphal acts of the apostles also began to attract attention and to be reworked in the late fourth or rather the early fifth century, as part of a re-remembering of the apostolic age. Indeed, the *Life and Miracles of Thekla* – written in Anatolia in the fifth century (and with no allusion to the Theotokos) – may provide a kind of parallel to the rediscovery of the apocryphal life of the Virgin which we find expressed in the *Akathistos*.¹⁸ The elaboration of the imagery and typology in the early fifth-century homilies is too striking not to have a background, and Nicholas Conostas brings out its roots in the Apocrypha.¹⁹ Once made, and whatever the explanation for the seeming gap in consciousness, the connection with the early stories of the Virgin allowed imaginations to run riot, as we see happening in homiletic and hymns from the fifth century on, and indeed in a whole nexus of later apocryphal narratives.²⁰

The document on Mary issued in 2005 by the Anglican and Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC II)²¹ speaks of a ‘re-reception’ of Mary in both Churches, and an Anglican writer at the time headed an article about it with the title ‘There’s nothing to fear about Mary’. It is striking that this officially agreed document says next to nothing about the Eastern Church, although it does indeed testify to the fascination and the importance of Mary for all Christian traditions.

The subject has also raised methodological questions, for instance in relation to gender: did the flourishing cult of the Theotokos somehow express

de Strycker, S.J., *La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques. Recherches sur le Papyrus Bodmer 5 avec une édition critique du texte grec et une traduction annotée*, *Subsidia Hagiographica* 33 (Brussels, 1961); trans. J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford, 1993; repr. 2005), 57–67.

¹⁸ See S.F. Johnson, *The Life and Miracles of Thekla. A Literary Study* (Cambridge MA, 2006).

¹⁹ Conostas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 325–8.

²⁰ Shoemaker, ‘Death and the maiden’; *idem*, ‘The Virgin Mary in the ministry of Jesus and the early Church according to the earliest *Life of the Virgin*’, *HTR* 98.4 (2005), 441–67; see also M. van Esbroeck, *Maxime le Confesseur: Vie de la Vierge*, *CSCO* 478–9, *Scriptores Iberici* 21–2 (Leuven, 1986), a later Georgian translation of a seventh-century Greek original attributed to Maximos Confessor. Later Byzantine *Lives* of the Virgin were written in the ninth century by Epiphanius, and the tenth by Symeon Metaphrastes (with ‘censorship’ of some uncanonical material) and John the Geometrician.

²¹ *Mary. Grace and Hope in Christ*, The Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission: An Agreed Statement (London, 2005).

or have implications for the position of Byzantine women?²² And how far does the rich corpus of Byzantine art with the Theotokos as its subject relate to the broader issues about religion in Byzantine society? Is our understanding of the cult over-influenced by the admittedly seductive evidence of Marian icons and visual representations?

Many scholars are undoubtedly driven to this subject by religious motives, but for others, I would argue that Mary, or the Theotokos, fascinates because of her infinite variety, her capacity to escape whatever formulation we may try to impose upon her. She is both ordinary woman and the Mother of God. With touching homeliness the sixth-century Piacenza pilgrim wrote of venerating 'what they said was the flagon and the breadbasket of Saint Mary' at Diocaesarea and then of reclining on the very couch at Cana where Jesus attended the wedding and even ('undeserving though I am') writing on it the names of his parents.²³ The same Mary became in Byzantine art and thought the very symbol of orthodoxy. In the words of the Akathistos, she is indeed 'the woman in whom all opposites are reconciled'.²⁴

²² L.M. Peltomaa, 'Gender and Byzantine Studies from the viewpoint of methodology', *Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse* 140.1 (2005), 23–44, at 29–33.

²³ J. Wilkinson, trans., *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster, rev. edn, 2002), 131.

²⁴ *Akathistos Hymn*, Ikos 15.

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Section I: The Early Cult of the Virgin Mary: Pilgrimage, Miracles, Art and Texts

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The Initial Tradition of the Theotokos at the Kathisma: Earliest Celebrations and the Calendar

Rina Avner

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the issue of how the recent archaeological excavations at the site of the early Christian complex of the Kathisma on the Jerusalem–Bethlehem road (Figure 1.1) meet the relevant historical sources, contributing to a better and clearer picture of the earliest site in the Holy Land dedicated to the veneration of Mary Theotokos. It will also demonstrate how this holy place influenced the development of Marian worship in Jerusalem and affected the liturgy in the churches, both Eastern and Western.

In early Christianity the Kathisma (Greek for ‘seat’) was the name of a specific rock situated between Jerusalem and Bethlehem and hallowed by popular Christian lore. From the very beginning this distinguished rock was said to have been the seat on which allegedly the pregnant Virgin Mary sat to rest on the journey to Bethlehem, prior to Christ’s birth.¹ This early legend of Mary’s repose is recorded in the apocryphal *Protevangelion of James*, composed in the middle of the second century.² Chapter 17:2–3 relates that within three miles from Bethlehem, Mary had a vision in which she saw two people – one happy and rejoicing, the other sorrowful and mourning. Then as ‘they

¹ Y. Tsafrir, L. Di Segni and J. Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani: Iudaea Palaestina Eretz-Israel in the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Periods* (Jerusalem, 1994), 101–2; A. Klöner, *Archaeological Survey of Jerusalem, the Southern Sector* (Jerusalem, 2000), 90, site [106] 92; R. Avner, ‘The recovery of the Kathisma church and its influence on octagonal buildings’, in G.C. Bottini, L. Di Segni and D. Chrupcala, eds, *One Land – Many Cultures: Archaeological Studies in Honor of Fr. Stanislav Loffreda*, *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Collectio Maior* 42 (2003), 173–86; R. Avner, ‘The church of the Kathisma: its influence and role in the history of architecture and mosaic’ (unpubl. PhD thesis, University of Haifa, 2004).

² J. Gijssels and R. Beyers, *Libri de nativitate Mariae. Corpus Christianorum Apocryphorum* (Turnhout, 1997), 1–4; F.L. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, 1958): ‘Book of James’, 711.

came to the midst of the way', feeling the child pressing within her, she asked Joseph to help her descend from the ass and stopped for a rest.³ The following chapter relates that Joseph went to look for a cave where Mary could give birth discreetly.

Much later, in the sixth century, Theodore of Petra⁴ and Cyril of Scythopolis⁵ recorded that a church and monastery had been built in the fifth century at the site of the Kathisma and that the founder, a widow named Ikelia, had dedicated the church of the Kathisma to Mary Theotokos. The earliest mention of a site named Kathisma, midway on the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, is found in the Armenian lectionary dated by Renoux between 417 and 439.⁶ This latter source, reflecting the liturgy of Jerusalem in the fifth century, also mentions a feast of the Theotokos celebrated on 15 August in the church of the Kathisma, situated at the second milestone,⁷ halfway on the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.

In 1899, the site of the Kathisma was correctly identified by Dr von Riess.⁸ He argued that the Arabic name of a large water reservoir, called locally *Bir Qadismu*, has preserved in a corrupted form the original Greek name of the 'Kathisma'. In fact, during an excavation which I directed in 2000, we uncovered, close to the reservoir, walls and water installations dated to the early Byzantine period that abut the reservoir. Thus, it is clear that *Bir Qadismu* was contemporary with the excavated complex and that it was one of several Byzantine reservoirs which served the early Byzantine monastic complex which we excavated.⁹

³ *Protevangelion* 17:2–3 in C. von Tischendorf, ed., *Evangelia Apocrypha* (Leipzig, 1876), 32–3; E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, eds, *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. R.M. Wilson (London, 1963), 383; J.K. Elliot, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford, 1993; rev. edn 2005), 63–7.

⁴ Theodoros Petraeus, *Vita sancti Theodosii*, 12, 4–14; H. Usener, ed., *Der heilige Theodosius* (Leipzig, 1890), 13–14; A.J. Festugière, ed. and trans., *Les moines d'Orient. Les moines de Palestine, Cyrille de Scythopolis: Vies des Saints Jean L'Hésychaste, Kyriakos, Théodose, Théogenios, Abramios; Théodore de Petra: Vie de Saint Théodose 3* (Paris, 1963), 108–9. For the date, 531–6, see *ibid.*, 86; for 536–47, see J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades* (Jerusalem, 1977), 214.

⁵ Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Theodosii*, 236, 20 – 237, 2; Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient*, 57–85; J. Binns and R.M. Price, trans, *Cyril of Scythopolis: The Lives of the Monks of Palestine* (Kalamazoo MI, 1991), 262–3. For the date c. 557, see Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 214; for pre-558, see Binns and Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, xi, li.

⁶ A. Renoux, ed., *Le codex arménien Jérusalem 121*, PO 36/2 (1971), 181. For slightly different dates, see B. Capelle, 'La fête de la Vierge à Jérusalem au Ve siècle', *Le Muséon* 56 (1943), 19–20; Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 213.

⁷ A. Renoux, 'Un manuscrit du lectionnaire arménien de Jérusalem (Cod. Jer. Arm.121)', *Le Muséon* 74 (1961), 383.

⁸ Dr von Riess, 'Kathisma Palaion und der sogennante Brunnen der Weisen bei Mar-Elias', *ZDPV* 12 (1899), 19–23.

⁹ R. Avner, 'Jerusalem, Mar Elias – the Kathisma church', *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 117 (2005); http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail_eng.asp?id=106&mag_id=110 (accessed 5 August 2008).

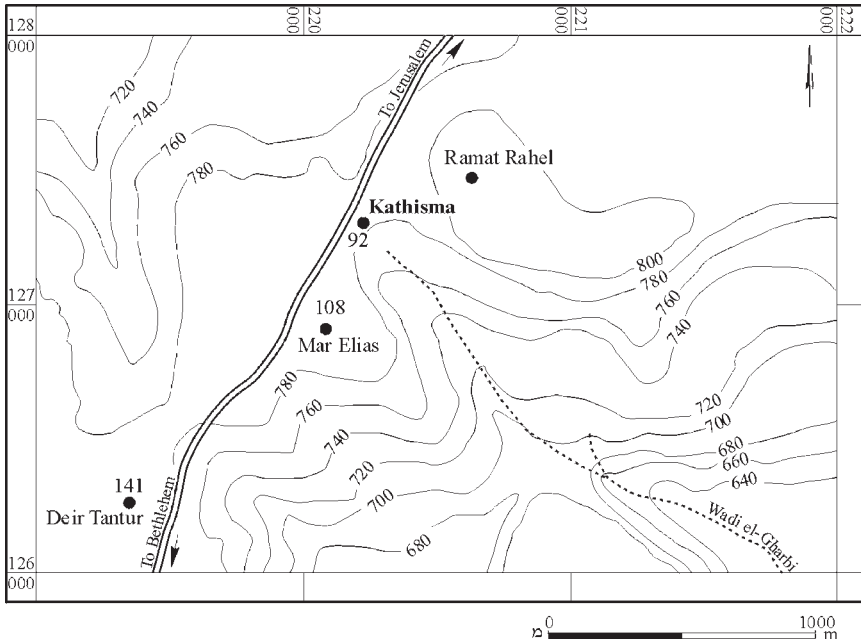


Fig. 1.1 Location map.

However, in the 1960s, a basilical church of more humble dimensions (c. 12.6×26.3 m)¹⁰ than the large octagonal church which we revealed near *Bir Qadismu* was uncovered by a team of archaeologists headed by Aharoni at a site included in the area of the modern kibbutz Ramat Rahel, situated on the north-eastern ridge with respect to our site on the Jerusalem–Bethlehem road (Figure 1.1). This church was erroneously identified by Testini as the lost church of the Kathisma.¹¹ It should be noted that at the time of Aharoni’s excavations, in the 1950s and 1960s, the reservoir was situated in the no-man’s land between the state of Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan. Aharoni and his team could not therefore survey the site we excavated by *Bir Qadismu* or be impressed by the abundant surface finds that appeared here: mosaic *tesserae* of various colors and sizes, marble fragments, ceramic roof tiles and early Byzantine pottery shards and glass. Now, however, our archaeological discovery of the much larger monumental church and monastic complex, coupled with more thorough research of the historical evidence with regard to our site along the road, as well as the results of new excavations at Ramat

¹⁰ Y. Aharoni, *Excavations at Ramat Rahel. Seasons 1961 and 1962* (Rome, 1964), plan 1.

¹¹ P. Testini, ‘The Kathisma church and monastery’, in Y. Aharoni, A. Ciasca, G. Garbini, M. Kochavi, P. Matthiae, and L.Y. Rahmani, eds, *Excavations at Ramat Rahel, Seasons 1959–60* (Rome, 1962), 73–91.

Rahel headed by Oded Lipshitz and Manfred Oeming,¹² allow us firmly to establish the correct identification of the ancient site of the Kathisma. In the present chapter, therefore, the archaeological results of the excavated site at *Bir Qadismu* will be examined on the basis of past research with a view to confirm the correct identification of the Kathisma and to reconsider its history. Special attention will be paid to the feast of the Theotokos and its dedication and celebration in the Kathisma, with reference to the relevant literary sources. I will focus on the major and basic studies by Jugie,¹³ Capelle,¹⁴ Renoux¹⁵ and Aubineau,¹⁶ as well as on related studies by Milik,¹⁷ Wilkinson,¹⁸ Ray¹⁹ and Shoemaker,²⁰ concerning the question of the identification of the site and its original cult.

The archaeological data and related historical information

The first archaeological remains of the monastic complex, with its octagonal church of the Kathisma, were revealed accidentally during construction work when a lane was added to the modern motorway leading from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. Two rescue excavations were conducted in 1992 and 1997.²¹ In 1999 we were joined by the late George Lavas and Eirini Rosidis, from the University of Athens, for an additional season. This was made possible by the cooperation of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the owner of the terrain.²² Evidently, most of the masonry of the ancient buildings was

¹² O. Lipschits, M. Oeming, Y. Gadot, B. Arubas and G. Cinamon, 'Ramat Rahel, 2005', *Israel Exploration Journal* 56 (2006), 227–35.

¹³ M. Jugie, *La mort et l'assomption de la Sainte Vierge*, ST 114 (Vatican City, 1944); *idem*, 'La première fête mariale en orient et en occident: l'Avent primitif', *EO* 22 (1923), 129–52; *idem*, 'La fête de la dormition et l'assomption de la sainte Vierge en orient et en occident', *L'année théologique* 4 (1943), 11–42.

¹⁴ Capelle, 'La fête', 1–33.

¹⁵ Renoux, 'Un manuscrit du lectionnaire arménien', 361–85; *idem*, 'Le codex arménien', *Le Muséon* 75 (1962), 383–98.

¹⁶ M. Aubineau, ed., *Les homélies festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem*, Subsidia Hagiographica 59 (2 vols, Brussels, 1978), vol. 1.

¹⁷ J.T. Milik, 'Notes d'épigraphie et de topographie palestiniennes', *Revue Biblique* 66 (1959), 550–75; *Revue Biblique* 67 (1960), 354–67.

¹⁸ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 163.

¹⁹ W.D. Ray, 'August 15 and the development of the Jerusalem calendar' (unpubl. PhD thesis, University of Notre Dame IN, 2000).

²⁰ S.J. Shoemaker, 'Christmas in the Qur'ān: the Qur'ānic account of Jesus' Nativity and Palestinian local tradition', *Jerusalem Studies in Islam and Arabic* 28 (2003), 11–39.

²¹ Both were directed by the author on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority. R. Avner, 'Jerusalem Mar Elias', *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 13 (1993), 89–92; *eadem*, 'Jerusalem, Mar Elias – the Kathisma church', *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 20 (1998), 101*–103*. The final report will be published in the monograph series, *IAA Reports*.

²² R. Avner, G. Lavas and E. Rosidis, 'Jerusalem, Mar Elias – the Kathisma church', *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 20 (1998), 89*–92*.

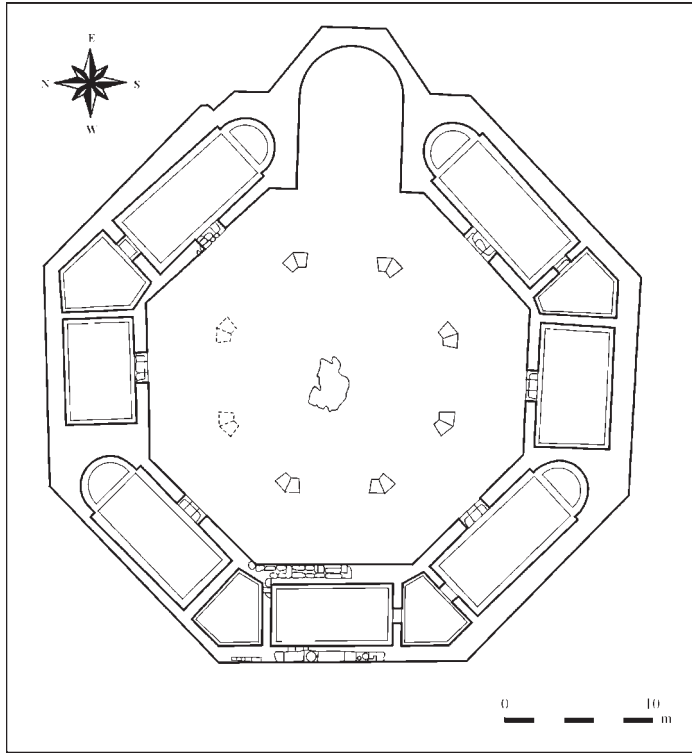


Fig. 1.2 The Kathisma Church in the 5th century: plan.

removed in ancient times to serve as building material in new constructions in the surrounding villages, as reported in the twelfth century by the Russian pilgrim, abbot Daniel.²³ Indeed, most of the walls have not survived, but fortunately their layout can be retraced, thanks to preserved margins of floor mosaics which have been uncovered, as well as surviving plaster bedding of the foundations of the rooms. Most of the doorways were carefully constructed and they were quite wide (1.80–2 m).

The plan of the Kathisma church (Figure 1.2.) was based on the principle of three concentric octagons. In the innermost octagon, precisely at the geometrical centre of the church, a large chunk of bedrock was revealed. Irregular in form, it is approximately 3 m long and about 2.5 m wide, and it rises to about 20 cm above the level of the surrounding floor. It is clear that the rock was kept in full view throughout the entire period that the building served as a church. We can thus surmise that the rock was the focus of the church and no doubt the *raison d'être* for the construction of the building.

²³ G. Le Strange, ed. and trans., *The Pilgrimage of the Russian Abbot Daniel (1106 A.D.)*. The Library of the Palestine Pilgrim Text Society 4 (London, 1896), 38–9.

Twenty-four probes were dug throughout, in almost all of the rooms and areas of the church, revealing three layers of floors, one on top of the other. Thus, three phases of the octagonal church were detected. The dating of the original first phase, according to coins retrieved underneath the lowest floors and their beddings, is from the first half to the mid-fifth century.²⁴ In the probe excavated close to the centre of the church and to the west of the rock (probe 1–1 in Figure 1.2), under the earliest floor of the original phase of the church, a segment of a foundation wall was revealed relating to the holy rock, but predating the church building (marked as ‘w140’ in the plan in Figure 1.2). To date, the earliest small finds that we retrieved from sealed archaeological contexts do not predate the fifth century: this segment of the ancient wall should therefore be dated to the first half of the fifth century. Consequently, I suggest that this wall should be attributed to the earliest historical chapter of the site, perhaps referred to in the Armenian Lectionary, prior to the fifth-century octagonal church constructed by Ikelia. This early wall is archaeological evidence suggesting that the rock was hallowed and venerated already in the fifth century, possibly in a modest shrine built over the rock. The date of the first phase of the octagonal church, provided by the numismatic finds, is in accordance with the historical date of Ikelia’s church, as provided by Cyril of Scythopolis. He explicitly reported that at the time when St Theodosios joined the monastery of the Kathisma, Ikelia was constructing the church there, which she dedicated to Mary Theotokos.²⁵ This detail enables us to refine the dating of the church close to 456.²⁶

The second phase of the church is dated by coins retrieved above the floors of the first phase and below the floors of the second phase, as well as in the beddings of the floors of the second phase. These provide a date in the first half of the sixth century and not later than the monetary reform of Justinian in 538.²⁷ This date is relevant to the issue of the identification of the site, which we will come back to later in the discussion concerning the ‘Old’ and ‘New Kathisma’ monasteries.

The third phase is dated by coins, pottery and glass fragments to the first half of the eighth century; this has already been treated elsewhere.²⁸

The holy rock, the alleged seat of the Virgin, is mentioned as such for the first time by Theodosios the Pilgrim between 510 and 530.²⁹ He reports:

²⁴ Donald Ariel and Gabriela Bijovsky deciphered the Byzantine coins. Ariel will publish the numismatic chapter of the excavation’s final report in *IAA Reports*.

²⁵ See note 5 above.

²⁶ L. Di Segni, *Cyril of Scythopolis, Lives of the Monks of the Jerusalem Desert* (Jerusalem, 2005), 251, n. 3; D.J. Chitty, *The Desert a City* (London, 1966), 212.

²⁷ I thank Donald Ariel and Gabriella Bijovsky for deciphering the coins. See note 24 above.

²⁸ R. Avner, ‘The Kathisma – a Christian and Muslim pilgrimage site’, *ARAM* 18–19 (2007), 541–57.

²⁹ Tsafirir, Di Segni and Green, *Tabula Imperii*, 50; Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 5, 185.

Now there is a stone in a place three miles from the city of Jerusalem which my lady Mary, the Mother of the Lord, blessed when she dismounted from the ass on her way to Bethlehem and sat down on it. The superintendent Urbicius cut this stone out, shaped it into an altar, and was about to send it to Constantinople. But when he had brought it as far as St Stephen's Gate, he could move it no further. A yoke of oxen was dragging the stone. So when they found no way to move it any further, it was sent back to the Lord's tomb. There, this stone was made into an altar and used for communion. It is behind my Lord's tomb. This superintendent Urbicius died in Constantinople in the reign of the emperor Anastasios ... the earth would not receive Urbicius, but three times his tomb cast him out ...³⁰

It is not impossible that this story contains some truth. It may explain why the present rock of the Kathisma does not rise prominently high above the floors; but it surely demonstrates the high level of sanctity attributed to the rock of the Virgin's seat, since the altar which Urbicius had hewn from it was placed in such an important place in Jerusalem, close to the tomb of Christ, and was subsequently used for delivering communion. The aim of the whole story was to tell how and why Urbicius was punished after his death because he had defiled a most hallowed rock, which had previously been associated with the holy figure of the Virgin.

The holy rock halfway along the road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem is also mentioned by the Piacenza Pilgrim, who visited the Holy Land in about 570. We shall return to this account in our discussion of the site and tradition of the Kathisma in relation to Rachel's Tomb.

The Old and New Kathisma

In Theodore of Petra's *Vita Theodosii*, it is reported that when St Theodosios arrived in Jerusalem from his native Cappadocia, he wished to live in seclusion in the Judean desert. But the old monk who received Theodosios in Jerusalem sent him to the 'Old Kathisma', situated along the road to Bethlehem.³¹ In 1960, Milik suggested that there were two monasteries bearing the name 'Kathisma': the 'Old Kathisma' was the one to which St Theodosios was sent, whereas the 'New Kathisma' was never mentioned in the historical sources.³² In 1977, Wilkinson recognised the basilica which Aharoni had excavated in Ramat Rahel as the monastery of the 'New Kathisma',³³ while recently, Shoemaker identified the basilica at Ramat Rahel as the 'Old Kathisma' and the octagonal church which we excavated at *Bir Qadismu* as the 'New Kathisma'.³⁴ Capelle, who discussed the possibility of the existence of two

³⁰ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 114–15.

³¹ See note 4 above.

³² Milik, 'Notes d'épigraphie', 571.

³³ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 163B.

³⁴ Shoemaker, 'Christmas', 32, nn. 59–60. Shoemaker based his dating of the basilica on a coin minted by Anastasios (498–516), which was retrieved from an installation that

monasteries named Kathisma, rejected this proposal.³⁵ He concluded that there is not sufficient historical evidence to support the existence of a second monastery by the same name. But he proposed a different explanation for why Theodore of Petra dubbed the Kathisma as 'Old': the church must have been in need of serious repairs, for Theodore notes that in around 500 the Kathisma was subject to extensive renovations, such that the changes introduced were considered to be a kind of refoundation.³⁶ Hence, following the renovation, the church was rededicated. This rededication was instituted in the calendar of the church of Jerusalem and was celebrated in the beginning of December, and was also documented in the Georgian calendar.³⁷

The Georgian calendar relies on several sources that span the fifth to the eighth century, and reflects primarily the calendar of Jerusalem in these centuries.³⁸ Hence, it contains feasts and changes introduced after the establishment of the Armenian Lectionary. The introduction of a rededication of the Kathisma in the calendar in the month of December, leading to Theodore of Petra's identification of the church as the 'Old Kathisma', actually refers to the significant renovations executed close to the year of Theodore's composition, recited for the first time in 531.³⁹ This interpretation, proposed by Capelle, is fully backed by the archaeological evidence. It co-relates to the finds of the second phase of the octagonal church. The second phase, as stated above, is dated to the first half of the sixth century and predates the monetary reform made by Emperor Justinian in 538.⁴⁰ The renovations included the enlargement

predates the church, and not, as Shoemaker reports, from a foundation trench of the wall of the church. Shoemaker neglects the criticism of J. Magness, *Jerusalem Ceramic Chronology circa 200–800 CE*, JSTOR/ASOR Monograph Series 9 (Sheffield, 1993), 88–9, 104–8, and esp. 89: 'The problems with the material [retrieved by Aharoni in the basilica at Ramt Rahel] are the result of the form and content of the publication. One problem concerns the coins, which were identified and described by L.Y. Rahmani ... Although each coin is fully described, no locus numbers are provided, nor is there any mention of coins in association with specific loci in the text. Therefore, it is impossible to associate the coins with their original contexts and with the assemblage of pottery.' To date, the original date for the basilica in Ramat-Rahel is unknown. The dating of the basilica was to be one of the major tasks to be undertaken in the excavation season in August 2007 by the archaeological expedition to Ramat Rahel, headed by Lipshitz and Oeming. See note 12 above.

³⁵ Capelle, 'La fête', 31–2.

³⁶ Capelle, 'La fête', 26–7, 32–3.

³⁷ G. Garitte, ed., *Le calendrier palestino-géorgien du sinaiticus 34 (xe siècle)* (Brussels, 1958), 402.

³⁸ Garitte, *Le calendrier*, 23–37; Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 214B–215A; Capelle, 'La fête', 1–3; M. Tarchnišvili, 'Zwei georgische Lektionarfragmente aus dem 5. und 8. Jahrhundert', *Kyrios* 6 (1942–43), 1–28.

³⁹ Theodore of Petra's *Vita Theodosii* was preached on the first anniversary of the death of St Theodosios, that is, 11 January 530, and, after additional editing, it was published after 536. See A. De Nicola, 'Theodore of Petra', in A. Di Berardino, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* 2, trans. A. Walford (Cambridge, 1992), 826; Festugière, *Les Moines d'Orient*, 86.

⁴⁰ W. Hahn, *Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire (Anastasius I–Justinian I, 491–565)*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte der

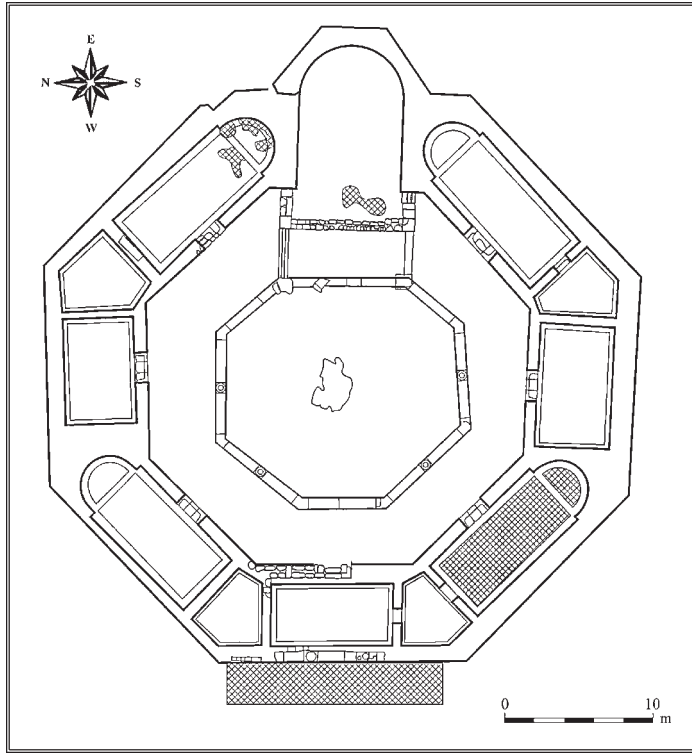


Fig. 1.3 The Kathisma Church in the 6th century: plan.

of the *bema* westward into the space of the eastern ambulatory (Figure 1.3) and the elevation of floors by new mosaics laid on top of the original floors.

Capelle's explanation is not only in accordance with the archaeological finds, but also provides an explanation for the introduction of a new dedication feast in the Kathisma, added into the Georgian lectionary.

Recently, Ray suggested that the dedication of the Kathisma was established to commemorate the construction of Ikelia,⁴¹ but this hypothesis is not supported by the archaeological data.

Was the Kathisma a Nativity site?

In 1923, Jugie proposed that the Kathisma should be identified as Christ's birthplace outside Bethlehem,⁴² as can be construed from the *Protevangelion* 18:1.⁴³ However, it should be stressed that Jugie retreated and changed his

Universität Wien 6 (Vienna, 2000), 16–18.

⁴¹ Ray, 'August 15', 50.

⁴² Jugie, 'La première fête mariale', 131–44.

⁴³ *Protevangelion* 18:1, Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*,

opinion in 1943.⁴⁴ The tradition of Christ's birth outside the city of Bethlehem is transmitted by a second-century source, namely, Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*.⁴⁵ This tradition is preserved in a fourth-century apocryphal composition in Latin called *Joseph the Carpenter*,⁴⁶ which thus postdates the *Protevangelion* and the *Dialogue with Trypho*. It states that the birthplace of Christ was close to Rachel's tomb. This is a topic on which I shall enlarge in the following discussion on the connections between the traditions and the sites of the Kathisma and Rachel's tomb.

In fact, the text of the *Protevangelion*, preserving the legend of Mary's rest on the road to Bethlehem before Christ's birth, contradicts the possibility that the Kathisma could have been the site of the Nativity outside Bethlehem. This may be concluded from the details of the account of Mary's rest after she and Joseph passed the third milestone halfway along the road to Bethlehem. By this account the event that took place at the third mile was Mary's vision of the two people. This incongruity was noticed and discussed by Joan Taylor,⁴⁷ who investigated other important early Christian sites, including those established by Constantine. She observed that 'archaeological and literary evidence taken together bears out the impression that in the Late Roman period sites that were especially holy to Christians were not venerated prior to the fourth century',⁴⁸ and that 'Christians appear to have had no interest in the sanctification of the material land of Palestine, or any part of it, before Constantine. The historical and archaeological evidence indicate the beginning of the fourth century as the time at which pilgrimage to certain Christian holy sites began, and that the sites themselves were developed ...'.⁴⁹ Our excavations at the Kathisma provide additional support to Taylor's conclusions, contradicting the suppositions of Walter Dean Ray's doctoral dissertation⁵⁰ concerning the existence of a very early Christian shrine at the Kathisma to be identified as the site of Christ's Nativity.⁵¹ Besides, it should be stressed that to date no material evidence has been found to support the theory that the Kathisma was identified by Christians at any time as the birthplace of Jesus. This is in accordance with the fact that the Kathisma is not mentioned in any of the

383; Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 64.

⁴⁴ Jugie, 'La fête de la Dormition'.

⁴⁵ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 78.12, PG 6, cols 657–8; T.B. Falls, trans., and M. Slusser, ed., *Saint Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho*, rev. T.P. Halton, *Selections from the Fathers of the Church 3* (Washington DC, 2003), 121.

⁴⁶ C. von Tischendorf, ed., *Historia Iosephi fabri lignarii 7*, in *idem, Evangelica Apocrypha*, 125; Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 114.

⁴⁷ J.E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places. The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins* (Oxford, 1993), 99–103, 336, esp. 103.

⁴⁸ Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places*, 335.

⁴⁹ Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places*, 338.

⁵⁰ Ray, 'August 15', 56–89, esp. 49–58, n. 54.

⁵¹ See n. 49 above. Since Ray was apparently unfamiliar with the archaeological information concerning the discovery of the Kathisma in the preliminary reports of the excavations, he did not know about the remains of the monastery which we uncovered around the octagonal church. See Ray, 'August 15', 54, n. 44.

historical documents that predate the fifth century. The archaeological and historical dates pertaining to the site of the Kathisma compel us to investigate it in its historical context of the fifth and the following centuries.

The feast of the Theotokos in the Kathisma

Church historians were studying the celebration of a Marian feast in the church of the Kathisma long before archaeological investigation of the site had begun.⁵² It is a commonplace of modern scholarship⁵³ to note that the feast of the Theotokos in the Kathisma was the earliest of the Marian feasts celebrated in Jerusalem, independently and disconnected from the cycle of the Epiphany and the Nativity feasts.⁵⁴ According to the Armenian lectionary, other events from the life of the Virgin were commemorated during the eight days of celebrations attached to the feast of Epiphany, marked and celebrated in Jerusalem in connection with the events of Christ's Nativity. All of these events, in combination with Mary, were remembered in holy places related to Christ: the Annunciation of Gabriel to Mary was celebrated on the fourth day of Epiphany on the Mount of Olives,⁵⁵ while the Visitation of Mary at Elisabeth's house was remembered on the third day in Sion.⁵⁶ In a later period, as recorded in the Georgian calendar,⁵⁷ the feast of Mary's Visitation to Elisabeth received its own *locus sanctus* in the village of Ein-Karem a few miles away from the city of Jerusalem, but it honoured Elisabeth.

However, in accordance with the Armenian lectionary, the Kathisma was the only strictly Marian *locus sanctus* devoted solely to the figure of Mary, as the Theotokos, and it was not a *locus sanctus* shared with the figure of Christ. Furthermore, the Armenian lectionary indicates that the feast of the Theotokos was initially celebrated in the Kathisma on 15 August, a date which was later moved to 13 August (a fact recorded in the Georgian lectionary). Moreover, the central theme of the celebration was the glorification of the Theotokos, focusing on Mary's virginal motherhood, as most scholars have observed.⁵⁸

⁵² See the list of works cited in nn. 4–7 and 12–15 above.

⁵³ Ray's recent study and conclusions, to my knowledge, are very new and form a minority. Besides, the contradictions between his theory and the material evidence, as discussed above, demand a fairer evaluation of his study and should await reviews by scholars both in the fields of Jewish apocrypha as well as the history of the early Church.

⁵⁴ Aubineau, *Les homélies festales*, vol. 1, 138–40; Renoux, *Le codex arménien*, 180–81.

⁵⁵ Renoux, *Le codex arménien*, 218–19.

⁵⁶ See above, n. 54.

⁵⁷ Garitte, *Le calendrier*, 189. The Visitation was celebrated in April, in honour of the Virgin and Elisabeth, in Ein-Karem.

⁵⁸ E.g. by Renoux who studied the Armenian lectionary; Aubineau who investigated and recognised the homily of Hesychios, the famous fifth-century preacher, which was composed especially for the feast of the Theotokos; and Capelle who investigated the Armenian lectionary by comparison with the Georgian calendar and the homily of Chryssippos composed for the feast of the Theotokos in the Kathisma, dependent on the homily of Hesychios for the same feast.

Unlike the Marian events commemorated and celebrated in connection with the cycle of the Epiphany of Christ in other *loci sancti*, the theme of the feast of the Virgin Mary was not connected with an event but with the celebration of a theological concept: namely, Mary's role as Theotokos. This was the major issue in the dispute against Nestorios and his followers, which took place at the ecumenical council convened in Ephesus in 431. Against this background, the feast of the Theotokos introduced at the Kathisma was in all probability instituted in the calendar of the church of Jerusalem following (and maybe as a consequence of) the victory over Nestorianism, as has been suggested and established by various scholars.⁵⁹

Recently, Ray proposed that the date of 15 August was chosen for the feast on account of its approximate equivalent date in the calendar of the book of Jubilee to the day of Sarah's conception of Isaac.⁶⁰ But since there is no evidence of any activity on the site of the Kathisma before the fifth century, nor any indication of a parallelism between Sarah and Mary in the Jerusalemite exegesis connected to the cult of Mary during this period, Ray's proposition demands additional support.⁶¹ In fact, Hesychios and Chryssippos did not cite any parallelism between Sarah and Mary in their Marian homilies (nor did they mention the parallels between Isaac and Jesus).

Early Marian feasts and churches in Jerusalem

The day of the feast of the Theotokos is recorded in the Armenian lectionary on 15 August and yet, according to the Georgian calendar, this was the date of Mary's Assumption, commemorated in Gethsemane in the church built by emperor Maurice (582–602) over her tomb.⁶² Consequently, the day of the Theotokos feast was advanced two days to 13 August.⁶³

The Georgian calendar also mentions four annual feasts celebrated in the church of the Virgin's tomb. Three of them were celebrated in Maurice's church; in addition to the day of the Assumption held on 15 August, there was a memorial of martyrs commemorated on 14 July⁶⁴ and a great dedication feast on 23 October.⁶⁵ As for 13 August, the calendar records a dedication, but Marcian's name as the constructor of this church is not mentioned for this

⁵⁹ Renoux, *Le codes arméniens*, 180–1; Aubineau, *Les homélies festales*, vol. 1, 132–5.

⁶⁰ Ray, 'August 15', 131–7, 262.

⁶¹ On the other hand, John Chrysostom had drawn a typological connection between Sarah and the Virgin Mary before 431. See Constans, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 278, nn. 15 and 16.

⁶² Garitte, *Le calendrier*, 302–3.

⁶³ Garitte, *Le calendrier*, 301.

⁶⁴ Garitte, *Le calendrier*, 278–9.

⁶⁵ Garitte, *Le calendrier*, 365–6.

date.⁶⁶ Thus, according to Garitte, there must have been an earlier structure over Mary's tomb before the one built by Maurice.⁶⁷

Abel proposed that the earlier church over Mary's tomb was constructed in the fifth century by the emperor Marcian (450–57) and that a mistake occurred when the name of the emperor was miscopied.⁶⁸ Abel relied on a story that was preserved in the *Euthymian History*, cited by John of Damascus in his second homily, *On the Dormition of the Virgin*.⁶⁹ It is stated there that after the council of Chalcedon (451), Pulcheria, who was building the palace church dedicated to the Theotokos in the palace of Blachernai at that time, asked Juvenal, the bishop of Jerusalem, about the discovery of Mary's tomb and ordered him to hand over relics of the Virgin found there.⁷⁰ According to Jugie and Honigmann, however, this story was invented no earlier than the sixth century in Constantinople; thus, the source does not provide any reliable evidence for the existence of a fifth-century church over Mary's tomb.

Another source, which reports a fifth-century Marian church in the valley of Kidron (where Gethsemane is situated), is the *Panegyric* of Makarios, bishop of Thkôw.⁷¹ However, this also has been shown by the scholars Nau, Hesse and Johnson to be a later, forged story, composed after the middle of the sixth century in Upper Egypt by a monophysite monk who lacked basic knowledge of geography.⁷²

The Armenian lectionary does not mention the site of Mary's tomb, nor any church dedicated to the Virgin in Jerusalem. Therefore, there is no written evidence of a fifth-century Marian church, nor of any other site within Jerusalem and its environs, except for the Kathisma. Archaeological excavations that have been carried out in the church of Mary's tomb and its surroundings have not yielded any finds that would indicate a date or offer any details informing us about an early Byzantine church over Mary's tomb.⁷³ The earliest information concerning a Marian church in the area of Gethsemane derives from the account of Theodosios the Pilgrim (510–30), but his report does not specify a Marian church commemorating either her tomb,

⁶⁶ Garitte, *Le calendrier*, 250.

⁶⁷ Garitte, *Le calendrier*, 278, 365.

⁶⁸ L.-H. Vincent and F.M. Abel, Jérusalem. *Recherches de topographie et d'archéologie et d'histoire 2 Jérusalem Nouvelle* (Paris, 1926), 809, n. 4.

⁶⁹ John of Damascus, *Homilia 2 in Dormitionem sanctissimae Dei Genitricis* 18, PG 96, cols 748A–752A; P. Voulet, ed. and trans., *Jean Damascène, Homélie sur la nativité et la dormition*, SC 80 (Paris, 1998), 168–75; B. Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* 5 (Berlin and New York, 1988), 169–82, 483–500, 516–40, 548–55.

⁷⁰ E. Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', *DOP* 5 (1950), 269–70.

⁷¹ D.W. Johnson, *Panegyric on Macarius of Tkôw Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria*, CSCO 415–16, Script. Copt., 41–2 (Leuven, 1980), 38, n. 68.

⁷² Johnson, *Panegyric on Macarius*, 8*–11*; see bibliography offered there.

⁷³ C.N. Johns, 'The Abbey of St Mary in the valley of Jehoshafat, Jerusalem', *QDAP* 8 (1939), 117–36; C. Katsimbini, 'New findings from Gethsemane', *Liber Annus* 26 (1976), 277–80; B. Bagatti, M. Piccirillo and A. Prodrómo, *New Discoveries at the Tomb of Virgin Mary in Gethsemane*, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Collectio Minor 17 (Jerusalem, 1975), esp. 44–5.

her house, or the house of her parents.⁷⁴ All of this evidence thus suggests that the Kathisma was the first Marian church in the proximity of Jerusalem and the first *locus sanctus* specifically dedicated to Mary as the Theotokos.

The candle procession during the feast of the Hypapante

The feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, and his meeting (*Hypapante*) with the high-priest Symeon the elder and Anna (Lk 2:23), was celebrated in Jerusalem in accordance with Jewish practice based on the holy scriptures (Lk 2; Lev 13:2) forty days after Christ's birth. By the Christian calendar this would take place on 14 February, as recorded in both the Armenian lectionary and the Georgian calendar.⁷⁵ This was a joint feast in honour of Christ and Mary since, according to Jewish law, the mother would be purified forty days after giving birth. Hence, the day of the *Hypapante* marked both the day of Mary's purification and the presentation of her first-born in the temple.⁷⁶ The *Hypapante* was surely one of the ancient feasts held in Jerusalem and, as we learn from the reliable report of the pilgrim Egeria (who resided in Jerusalem between 381 and 384),⁷⁷ it was celebrated in the fourth century at Golgotha.⁷⁸ According to Cyril of Scythopolis, Ikelia introduced a candle procession into the festive service of the *Hypapante* at the church of the Kathisma.⁷⁹ This custom was probably invented (or at least made habitual) by Ikelia, since Egeria (renowned for her detailed and accurate descriptions) did not mention any candle procession in her account of this feast. In 542, the Emperor Justinian introduced the candle procession of this feast into the calendar of Constantinople. The custom spread from the Byzantine capital throughout the Eastern Churches.⁸⁰ In Rome, the festive candle procession during the celebration of Christ's Presentation in the Temple was introduced by pope Sergius, who officiated between 687 and 701.⁸¹ From Rome the custom

⁷⁴ For bibliography, see Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 158; V. Shalev, 'Historical context, structure and function in churches of Palestine in Late Antiquity' (unpubl. PhD thesis, Tel-Aviv University, 1999), 159–62: *Breviaries* 7; *Theodoros the Pilgrim* 10; *Piacenza Pilgrim* 10; *Georgian Calendar*, in Garitte, *Le calendrier*, 250, 278, 301–2, 365; *Adomnanus I*, 12.1–5; *Commematorium* 10; *Bernard the Monk* 13; *Vita Constantini* 5, in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 203.

⁷⁵ Renoux, *Le codex arménien*, 228–9; Garitte, *Le calendrier*, 148–9.

⁷⁶ M. Marrionne, 'Presentation in the temple', in Di Berardino, *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* 2, 709–10; Cross, *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 226, 672, 1102.

⁷⁷ J. Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land* (Jerusalem and Warminster, 1981), 3.

⁷⁸ Egeria, *Itinerarium* 26, 12, in Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 128.

⁷⁹ Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Theodosii*, 236.20–237.2, in Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient*, 57–8; Binns and Price, *Lives of the Monks*, 262–3.

⁸⁰ Cross, *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 226.

⁸¹ A. Di Berardino, 'Sergius Pope', in Di Berardino, *Dictionary of the Eastern Church* 2, 768.

spread throughout the Roman Catholic churches, where it is still practised today as the 'Candlemas'.⁸²

Three Georgian works of art (Plates 1.4 – 1.6) provide visual testimonies of the celebration of the candle procession in the Eastern Church in the middle Byzantine period.⁸³ Dated between the tenth and the thirteenth century, they depict the scene of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, and include a processional candle in the iconography. In the silver plaque of *repoussé* work in Plate 1.4, Anna is depicted standing on the right and holding such a candle.⁸⁴ Another example is found in a detail in the frame of a silver icon of the Virgin from the monastery of Shemokmedi in Georgia (Plate 1.5), dated to the eleventh or twelfth century.⁸⁵ It features a processional candle in the centre, below the Christ child. Yet another example (Plate 1.6) is an enamel plaque from the Botkin collection, now in the Georgian Museum of Fine Art in Tbilissi, dated to the late twelfth century.⁸⁶ Here, the processional candle is depicted in the middle at the bottom of the scene, below the Christ child and the outstretched, covered hand of the high priest Symeon who receives the Christ child.

The close connection between the candle procession and the *Hypapante* in the Georgian church is reflected in the ancient name of this feast, as recorded in Kekelidze's edition of the Georgian calendar⁸⁷ and in a fragment of the *Gospel of Thomas* written in Georgia in the tenth century and published with a Latin translation by Garitte,⁸⁸ describing Christ's Presentation in the temple and his meeting with Symeon.⁸⁹

The relevance of these works to the topic of the candle procession in the festive service of the *Hypapante* is demonstrated by the well-known fact that for centuries the Georgian church maintained close liturgical connections with the church of Jerusalem.⁹⁰ Among these is the observance of the custom of

⁸² See n. 74.

⁸³ S. Amiranashvili, *Georgian Metalwork from Antiquity to the 18th Century* (London, New York, Sydney and Toronto, 1971), 82, figure 52; 115, figure 74; 119, figure 76.

⁸⁴ Amiranashvili, *Georgian Metalwork*, 82, 94, figure 52 (10th–11th c.): silver repoussé plaque from Sagholasheni.

⁸⁵ Amiranashvili, *Georgian Metalwork*, 115, 118, figure 74 (11th–12th c.): Shemokmedi icon of the Virgin, a detail of the basma (frame).

⁸⁶ Amiranashvili, *Georgian Metalwork*, 119, 126, figure 76: 12th c. enamel from the Botkin collection, currently in the Georgian Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilissi.

⁸⁷ Garitte, *Le calendrier*, 148–9; K. Kekelidze, *Ierusalimskii kanonar' VII veka* (Gruzinskaja versija) (Tbilisi, 1912), 180–4. I thank Stephen Shoemaker for reading and translating Kekelidze's comments for me.

⁸⁸ G. Garitte, 'Le fragment géorgien de l'Évangile de Thomas', *RHE* 51 (1956), 511–20.

⁸⁹ Garitte, 'Le fragment géorgien', 516.

⁹⁰ The Georgian church followed the calendar of Jerusalem from its beginning up to the tenth century, when it followed the calendar of Constantinople until the first quarter of the eleventh century. From the first quarter of the eleventh century until the seventeenth century, the Georgian church accepted the Sabaitic calendar. In 864, the *Protevangelion of St James* was translated into Georgian, probably in Palestine. In the same year, a homily by Hesychios of Jerusalem, composed for the *Hypapante*, was translated into Georgian in the monastery of St Sabas, not far from Jerusalem.

the candle procession during the feast of Christ's Presentation in the Temple, perhaps originally initiated by Ikelia in the church of the Kathisma and here reflected in the iconography of these Middle Byzantine works.

Pilgrimage: the Kathisma and Rachel's tomb

One important factor needs to be taken into account in any attempt to understand more fully the development of the holy place of the Kathisma as a pilgrimage site. It should be stressed that the location of the church, in the context of the environment of the holy topography of the region of Judea and its historical background, was no doubt an accelerating factor for pilgrimage. The Kathisma is located on the ancient road between the two most sacred Christian cities in the Holy Land. The road is the main thoroughfare to the Hebron hills, leading south to Be'ersheva and south-west to the southern Mediterranean coast and Gaza. Contrary to Mary's place of rest, as reckoned in the *Protevangelion of James* (17:2–3), the Kathisma is located precisely halfway between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Here, according to the text, Mary had the vision of the two people. Halfway along the road is surely also a convenient spot for a pilgrim to halt for a rest and to receive refreshment. Besides, the large dimensions (41 m long and 38 m wide) of the lavish church (Figure 1.2), as well as the complex plan with its four side-chapels, indicate that this was planned as a pilgrimage church; as such, the aim was to provide additional religious attractions which would encourage and accelerate religious tourism. One may surmise that the driving force behind this pilgrimage policy was Juvenal, the bishop of Jerusalem.

Such a policy bears out Bitton-Ashkeloni's observation that from the mid-fourth century onward, 'the issue of sacred geography and pilgrimage' and 'the territory of grace' were 'in the process of being transformed into the territory of power all over the Christian world.'⁹¹ Juvenal, who is remembered as the bishop who was instrumental in gaining Jerusalem's supremacy over Caesarea Maritima and who claimed jurisdiction over Antioch and equality with Rome,⁹² promoted Jerusalem as a pilgrimage centre and contributed to the multiplication of holy sites in the region. The fact that his name is associated by Theodoros of Petra and Cyril of Scythopolis with the foundation

See A. Linder, 'The Christian communities in Jerusalem', in J. Prawer, ed., *The History of Jerusalem. The Early Islamic Period (638–1099)* (Jerusalem, 1987), 124 and n. 119; M. Trachnišvili, *Geschichte der kirchlichen georgischen Literatur* (Vatican City, 1950), 440–41; G. Garitte, 'Le Protoévangile de Jacque en géorgien', *Le Muséon* 70 (1957), 233–65; Aubineau, *Les homélies festales*, vol. 1, XIII–XVIII.

⁹¹ B. Bitton-Ashkeloni, *Encountering the Sacred. The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage* 28 (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2005), 204.

⁹² F.W. Norris, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', in E. Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (New York and London, 2nd edn, 1997), vol. 1, 653.

of the Kathisma,⁹³ the fact that the Kathisma church (like any other) must have been consecrated by a bishop, and the fact that his name is mentioned in association with the cult of the Virgin Mary in three unrelated sources (the Euthymian History, the *Pleriphoriae* by John Rufus and a panegyric on Makarios, bishop of Tkôw) all indicate that Juvenal probably played a major role in the development of the Marian cult in Jerusalem.⁹⁴ It also seems likely that he approved the growth in the number of sites and churches that were dedicated to her, including the Kathisma, a church near the Probatic Pool and another church in her honour in Gethsemane.⁹⁵

Another aspect that is peculiar to the Holy Land, especially along the road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, is the holy topography. As we know from numerous pilgrim accounts, pilgrims carried their Bibles with them or listened to readings of passages from both the Old and the New Testament that related to the stations that they visited along the way.⁹⁶ Indeed, walking along this route would illustrate the strong connection between Old Testament figures and events which Christian exegesis interpreted typologically as forerunners or parallels of those in the New Testament.⁹⁷ Christian exegetes often presented messages in the symbolic vocabulary of the Old Testament, sometimes employing allegory to present figures and events from the Old Testament as prophetic prototypes, coupled with the events and figures in the New Testament, functioning as fulfillment of prophecies realised in the New

⁹³ See notes 4 and 5, above.

⁹⁴ See Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem'; D.W. Johnson, *A Panegyric on Macarius, Bishop of Tkôw Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria* VII. 6–7, CSCO, vols 415–16, *Scriptores Copti*, vols 41–2 (Louvain, 1980), vol. 1 (text), 50–52; vol. 2 (trans.), 8*–11*, 38–40.

⁹⁵ See also my forthcoming paper, based on numismatic evidence taken from archaeological excavations in Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem and John Rufus's topographical description of Juvenal's monastery. Here Juvenal's monastery is associated with the archaeological remains of a monastery attached to a basilica which was excavated by Barkay, and later by Y. Zelinger and myself, in Ketef-Hinnom. This site is situated on the Jerusalem–Bethlehem road, about a mile from David's Tower. If this identification is correct, it suggests that Juvenal contributed to the construction of a chain of monasteries along this road. See G. Barkay, 'Excavations at Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem', in H. Geya, ed., *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed* (Jerusalem, 2000), 90–92; G. Hillel, 'Jerusalem, the Byzantine period, church on Ketef Hinnom', in E. Stern, A. Lewinson-Golbova and J. Aviram, eds, *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo and Singapore, 1993), vol. 2, 784; R. Avner and Y. Zelinger, 'Jerusalem, Ketef Hinnom', *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 113 (2003), 82*–84*, figures 190–2. The final report of the recent excavations will be published by Avner and Zelinger in *Atiqot*.

⁹⁶ See, for example, Egeria, *Itinerarium*, 47.5 in Wilkinson, Egeria's Travels, 146; O. Limor and G. Stroumsa, eds, *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms* (Turnhout, 2006), 47–50, 113.

⁹⁷ Bibliography on the issue is vast. See, for example, N. Constatas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity. Homelies 1–5, Text and Translation*, *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* 64 (Leiden, 2003), 131, ff., with bibliography; M. van Esbroeck, 'The Virgin as the true Ark of the Covenant', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), 63–65, with bibliography.

Testament. Thus, the Old and the New Testaments were perceived together as complementing each other and the journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem could become an 'interactive' lesson in Christian doctrine.⁹⁸

In this respect, the legend of Mary's repose on the way to Bethlehem appears to have been invented in accordance with a model found in the Old Testament. A major candidate for such a model is of course the story of Rachel's birth-throes and her ensuing death in labour while giving birth to Benjamin on the road to Bethlehem. It seems more than probable that the location of the Kathisma close to Rachel's tomb, or her death place, is not accidental,⁹⁹ for it appears in Genesis 35:16–20 as follows:

... Rachel was in labour and her pains were severe ... so Rachel died and was buried by the side of the road to Ephrathah, that is, Bethlehem. Jacob set up a sacred pillar over her grave; it is known to this day as the pillar of Rachel's grave.¹⁰⁰

The connection between the events that followed the story of Christ's birth and the matriarch Rachel in Christian tradition was made at an early date. It appears already in Matthew 2:16, when Rachel mourns Herod's massacre of the infants.¹⁰¹ The Kathisma takes this connection still further. There is a parallelism drawn between the stories of Jesus's pressure in Mary to be born and Rachel's labour, since these narratives focus on two mothers at the time of childbirth. The stories deal with the topic of motherhood, but whereas Rachel of the Old Testament dies in labour, her successor Mary lives to give birth to the Redeemer. This parallel must have been noticed by the Christian pilgrims who visited this area, walked between the two topographically close stations and stopped at the Kathisma and at Rachel's tomb.

By association, since Rachel died while giving birth, that is, in accordance with Eve's punishment (Gen 3:16), another connection between the figure of Mary in the legend hallowing the rock of the Kathisma and the biblical story of Rachel's death may be detected in the popular image of Mary as the second Eve, whose role was to free women from Eve's primal sin and punishment. This image was known in Jerusalem already in the fourth century: it was used in about 374 by Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, in his *Catechesis*.¹⁰² The image

⁹⁸ E.D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Late Roman Empire, AD 312–460* (Oxford, 1982), 3–5 and nn. 14, 16, 17; 83–106; Limor and Stroumsa, *Holy Land*, 49.

⁹⁹ R. Avner, 'Birth pangs on the Bethlehem road', in Y. Eshel, ed., *Judea and Samaria Research Studies. Proceedings of the 8th Annual Meeting 1998* (Ariel, 1999), 155–60.

¹⁰⁰ Genesis 35:16–20: English trans. in *The Bible and Apocrypha* (Oxford and Cambridge, 1970), 40.

¹⁰¹ Mt 2:18 interprets the massacre as the realisation of Jer 31:15.

¹⁰² Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, 12, 5; 12, 15 in E. Yarnold, trans., *Cyril of Jerusalem, The Early Church Fathers* (London and New York, 2000), 142, 146, 199, n. 3, 200, n. 6.

gained popularity during the fifth century¹⁰³ and it can be found in fifth-century Jerusalem in the homilies of Hesybios¹⁰⁴ and Chryssippos.¹⁰⁵

The distance between the Kathisma and Rachel's tomb must be discussed. The Armenian lectionary locates the Kathisma at the second milestone, halfway along the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.¹⁰⁶ The pilgrim from Bordeaux, who visited the Holy Land in 333,¹⁰⁷ locates Rachel's tomb also halfway along the same road, two miles away from Bethlehem.¹⁰⁸ He reports that the distance from Jerusalem to Bethlehem is four miles. Further, he notes that Rachel's tomb is located on the right-hand side of the road and within a distance of two miles from Bethlehem. It is precisely at this location that the Armenian lectionary places the Kathisma. The location of Rachel's tomb halfway along the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem is repeated by the anonymous pilgrim of Piacenza,¹⁰⁹ who visited the Holy Land in about 570,¹¹⁰ and by Epiphanius the Monk,¹¹¹ whose account is dated to between 639 and 689.¹¹²

The account of the Piacenza pilgrim deserves a separate study.¹¹³ His description of the Kathisma is an amalgamation of several traditions drawn from various sites. The Piacenza pilgrim is known to have a tendency to confuse sites and traditions, especially when the sites are geographically close to each other or if they are located in Egypt. These weaknesses have been pointed out by Wilkinson and Donner, and have been elaborated by Limor.¹¹⁴ In spite of this, the Piacenza pilgrim does have other virtues, for sometimes his report constitutes the only and ultimate source, especially with regard to local traditions and customs unknown from any other text.¹¹⁵

The Piacenza pilgrim locates Rachel's tomb at the third milestone, midway on the road to Bethlehem, and he identifies the site with the resting place of Mary during the flight into Egypt. He mentions the existence of a lavish

¹⁰³ Proklos of Constantinople, Homilies 1.II.35; 3.V.8; 4.I.10; 4.II.36–7; 5.III.89; 5.III.110–11 in Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 138–9, 200–1, 208–9, 213, 226–7, 261, 263. See 282–90 for discussion on Mary as second Eve before the Ephesus council in 431.

¹⁰⁴ Hesybios, Homilies I.2.10–12; V.1.27; V.4.6; VI.1.12–6 in Aubineau, *Les homélies festales*, vol. 1, 26–7 (see bibliography in n. 4), 160–61, 165, 195.

¹⁰⁵ Chryssippos, *Oratio in sanctam Mariam Deiparam* 3, in M. Jugie, ed., *Homélies Mariales Byzantines*, PO 19 (Paris, 1925; repr. Turnhout, 1990), 340.40–341.10, 35.

¹⁰⁶ Renoux, *Le codex arménien*, 354–7.

¹⁰⁷ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 212.

¹⁰⁸ Bordeaux Pilgrim, *Itinerarium*, 12; P. Geyer, ed., *Itinera Hierosolymitana saeculi IIII–VIII*, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 39 (Vienna, 1989), 25; Limor and Stroumsa, *Holy Land*, 37.

¹⁰⁹ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 85; Limor and Stroumsa, *Holy Land*, 236.

¹¹⁰ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 6–7; Limor and Stroumsa, *Holy Land*, 210–11.

¹¹¹ H. Donner, 'Epiphanius the monk, account of the holy city and holy places', *ZDPV* 87 (1971), 70.

¹¹² Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 214B; Donner, 'Epiphanius the monk', 44–5.

¹¹³ See n. 27 above; Avner, 'Birth pangs on the Bethlehem road', 158–9.

¹¹⁴ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 7, n. 59; H. Donner, *Pilgerfahrt ins Heilige Land. Die älteste Berichte christlicher Palaestinapilger (4–7 Jahrhundert)* (Stuttgart, 1979), 245–55; Limor and Stroumsa, *Holy Land*, 211–12.

¹¹⁵ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 6; Limor and Stroumsa, *Holy Land*, 216.

church at the site and he describes sweet water emanating from a holy rock, from which Mary drank from on the flight of the holy family into Egypt.

The similarity between this report, the description of the rest of the holy family on their flight into Egypt, as told in the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, chapters 17, 18, and the Qur'ān, has been noticed in the past¹¹⁶ and repeated recently by Shoemaker. The latter proposed that the Piacenza pilgrim recorded a local tradition that located the resting place of the holy family on the flight into Egypt at the Kathisma.¹¹⁷ *Pseudo-Matthew* has, however, recently been dated to the sixth century,¹¹⁸ and is known to have been influenced by the *Protevangelium of James*,¹¹⁹ which in turn was most likely composed in Syria or Egypt.¹²⁰

Gijssel and MacCanmara have noted that the last six chapters in *Pseudo-Matthew* rely on Egyptian sources, written or transmitted verbally, which focus on legends and deeds of Christ in the story of the flight into Egypt. Gijssel proposed that these legends were attached to specific sites in Egypt which became attractive to Christian believers.¹²¹

It seems therefore that the Piacenza pilgrim was confused about places and their traditions and conflated the site of Mary's rest (not the rest of the entire holy family) during the flight into Egypt with her rest before the Nativity.

However, his description of water emanating from the rock may explain a ceramic pipe which was uncovered at the site of the Kathisma during restoration work done a short time after the archaeological excavations had finished. After measuring the elevation of the pipe at various points and calculating its slope, it was quite clear that the pipe fed liquid from somewhere in the north-eastern part of the church (possibly from a second floor above the north-eastern chapel (see Plate 1.7) down to a depression (a cup-mark) at the holy rock at the centre of the octagonal church. This pipe was part of an installation, a conduit that produced *eulogia* ('blessings') in the form of holy liquid (no doubt water) that was hallowed and believed to acquire virtues made potent by the physical contact with the holy rock, the alleged seat of the Virgin. The pipe was found below a second phase floor of the church and above a pier that belonged to the first phase of the church. It should be dated accordingly to the sixth century, and not later than 538. Thus, it is quite possible that the Piacenza pilgrim actually saw the marvel of water emanating from the rock.

To sum up, the archaeological evidence is in full accordance with the historical information derived from the relevant historical sources. There probably was some kind of modest shrine at the site in the first half of the fifth century, as mentioned in the Armenian lectionary. A lavish octagonal pilgrimage church, with an attached monastery, was built by the widow Ikelia

¹¹⁶ For example by Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 85, n. 38.

¹¹⁷ Shoemaker, 'Christmas in the Qur'ān', 24, 29–31.

¹¹⁸ Gijssel and Beyers, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 50, n. 4.

¹¹⁹ Gijssel and Beyers, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 10–14, 48, 50–9.

¹²⁰ M.P. McHugh, 'Protevangelium of James', in Ferguson, *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, vol. 2, 955.

¹²¹ Gijssel and Beyers, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, 11, n. 4.

around 456, as reported by Theodore of Petra and Cyril of Scythopolis. By the sixth century, the church seems to have been in need of serious repairs, as the title 'Old' given to the Kathisma by Theodore of Petra hints. Consequently, a large renovation was executed before 538 and probably close to 531. As a consequence of the renovation and changes introduced in the interior, a feast of dedication was introduced into the calendar of Jerusalem.

In conclusion, it should be stressed that the Kathisma was the most ancient Marian *locus sanctus* in Jerusalem and its environs. From the very beginning, the church that was built over the rock of Mary's 'seat' was intended to glorify the Virgin as the 'God-bearer'. Hence, the earliest strictly Marian feast was the celebration dedicated to the Theotokos, separate from the figure of Christ and the events of the Nativity cycle. Her feast was established and instituted in the calendar in accordance with the views of the bishop of Jerusalem, Juvenal, upon his return from the first Council of Ephesos. However, the original date of the feast of the Theotokos, inaugurated by Juvenal on 15 August at the Kathisma, was later moved backwards to the 13 August in order to accommodate another Marian feast, namely the celebration of her Assumption. The Kathisma was erected by Ikelia five years after the Council of Chalcedon (451). The candle procession which she introduced in the Church of the Kathisma in commemoration of the purification of the Virgin coincides with the event of the Presentation of the infant Jesus at the temple.¹²² Over the centuries this ceremony became widespread in the East and was adopted in Western tradition as 'Candlemas'.

¹²² A reply to Stéphane Verhelst, 'Le 15 août et le 9 Ave et le Kathisma', *Questions liturgiques* 82 (forthcoming), 161–91.

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Mary at the Threshold: The Mother of God as Guardian in Seventh-Century Palestinian Miracle Accounts

Derek Krueger

Three early seventh-century Palestinian monastic texts attribute to the Theotokos the power to regulate women's access to sacred space. The *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschos, Antony of Choziba's *Miracles of the Theotokos at the Monastery of Choziba*, and the *Life of Mary of Egypt* prompt inquiry into the Virgin's role as guardian or doorkeeper in early Byzantine Christian imagination, policing the boundaries of orthodoxy, gender, the Eucharist and redemption. In these narratives the Virgin figures not as an open and concave space, but rather as the threshold of space, the *limen* separating the sacred and the profane.¹

The *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschos, completed before AD 619, recounts one woman's attempt to enter the Church of the Anastasis in Jerusalem.² The story highlights the Theotokos's control over sacred boundaries. On the night of Holy Sunday (probably the eve of Easter), Kosmiane, the wife of a patrician named Germanos, tried to enter the 'holy and life-giving sepulchre of our Lord Jesus Christ' in order to worship. 'When she approached the sanctuary (ιερατεῖον), our Lady the holy Theotokos, met her in visible form (ὄφθαλμοφανῶς), together with other women, and said, "Since you are not one of us, neither enter [here], nor join us.'"³ Moschos supplies the reason

¹ Although I am only tangentially dependent on them, the classic anthropological accounts of the significance of the *limen* or threshold remain A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. M.B. Vizedom and G.L. Caffee (Chicago, 1960); V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca NY, 1969), esp. 94–130; and M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1966), esp. 114–28. For a broad view of Mary's place in the cultural imagination, see A. Cameron, 'The cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: religious development and myth-making', in R.N. Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, Studies in Church History 39 (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester NY, 2004), 1–21.

² John Moschos, *Spiritual Meadow (Pratum Spirituale)*, PG 87, cols. 2851–3112. English translation: J. Wortley, trans., John Moschus, *The Spiritual Meadow* (Kalamazoo, 1992).

³ Chapter 48, PG 87, col. 2904.

for Mary's prohibition: Kosmiane was a member of the sect of Severos Akephalos, a Monophysite heretic. Defending Chalcedonian doctrine by defending Chalcedonian space, the Virgin restricts access to the tomb where her son manifested the glory of the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures by rising from the grave. She protects the purity of the shrine from being polluted by the presence of heretics. And yet the Virgin's solution does not require theological re-education. Instead, she demands that Kosmiane identify with the proper ecclesial group. 'The woman realised ... that she would not be allowed in until she joined the *holy catholic and apostolic Church* of Christ our God'. The tag quotation from the Nicene Creed (a text used by both the followers of Severos and the followers of Chalcedon) emphasises not a point of doctrine, but rather of ritual practice. Kosmiane 'sent for the deacon, and when the holy chalice arrived, she partook of the holy body and blood of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and thus she was found worthy to worship unimpeded at the holy and life-giving sepulchre'.

In this story, Mary patrols the threshold of holy space, regulating who may enter and under what circumstance. She monitors Kosmiane's bodily boundaries as well. Before Kosmiane can enter the sanctuary, she must partake of the Chalcedonian Eucharist: that is, the properly consecrated body of Christ must enter her first. She who belonged to the wrong religious body must conform to Christ's true body before entering the house of the body of God. Like her own body, the Theotokos preserves the shrine's purity, so that nothing defiling may enter.

Additional evidence in Moschos's text suggests that Mary's position at the threshold applied particularly to cases of women's access to sacred space. The story of Kosmiane occurs at the end of a cluster of four texts, each involving an appearance of the Virgin or her icon. Moschos says that he heard the story of Kosmiane from a certain Anastasios, priest and treasurer of the Church of the Anastasis. Immediately after the story of Kosmiane, Moschos narrates another tale from Anastasios that is a strikingly similar to hers, but marked by a crucial difference. When Gebemer became the military governor of Palestine, 'his first act was to come and worship at the holy Anastasis'.⁴ When he approached, 'he saw a ram [κρίος] charging at him intent on impaling him on its horns'. The Greek word for ram is κρίος and is here possibly a complex pun on κύριος, 'Lord'. No one else at the shrine could see this ram, but several times, the ram barred Gebemer's entry, threatening to run him through. The chapel guardian [σταυροφύλαξ] advised him that he had something in his soul preventing him from worshiping at the holy site. He confessed his sins at great length, but the ram still kept him from entering. There must be something else! 'Could it be that I am forbidden to enter because I am in communion with Severos, and not with *the holy catholic and apostolic Church*?' He asked the guardian to bring him the mysteries, and 'when the chalice arrived, he made his communion, and thus entered and worshipped, no longer seeing anything'. Paired as they are in the text, the stories of Kosmiane and Gebemer

⁴ Chapter 49, PG 87, cols 2904–5.

suggest that Mary's particular role was to regulate *female* penetration of the church, while a male guardian (a κριός) ensured the orthodoxy of male entrants and the integrity of their bodies. Nor is Moschos's Mary all-powerful; elsewhere, he attests her limits. When a woman whose daughter had been wronged by the emperor Zeno entreated the Virgin for justice, Mary had to confess her failure: 'I frequently try to get satisfaction for you', but Zeno's habit of generous almsgiving prevented her.⁵

A second text confirms Mary's role as gatekeeper at Palestinian sacred sites with respect to women. In his *Miracles of the Theotokos at the Monastery of Choziba*, written shortly after 634, Antony of Choziba recounts how Mary facilitated a woman's ingress into a monastery where women were previously forbidden.⁶ A noblewoman with an unspecified disease had travelled from Constantinople to the Holy Land in search of a cure. After praying in Jerusalem and at the Jordan, she wanted to visit the monasteries of the Judean desert. While she was carried on a litter 'she saw in a vision our holy lady the Theotokos', who asked her, 'Why do you travel around everywhere and yet you have not entered my house?'. The noblewoman replied, 'And where, Lady, is your house so I can enter it?' When Mary gave her directions to Choziba, the woman responded, 'I hear, Lady, that women cannot go there.' 'The blessed one said to her, "Come, go down, and I will introduce you, and I will also grant you the gift of healing."' Mary thus manifests her power at and over the monastery by permitting the woman – and subsequently other women – access to male monastic space. It is worth noting that the story leaves Mary's previous and abiding presence among the monks unremarked; apparently her presence did not violate the gender prohibition. Furthermore, if Mary's gender was instrumental in lifting the ban on women in the monastery, this is left implicit.⁷

Two other details of Antony's story are worthy of note. While the woman was permitted to spend the night in the sacristy (διακονικόν), it was not possible for her to be in the church itself, 'on account of the rule'. Thus there were limits on Mary's ability to permit women's access. Furthermore, after he recounts the miracle of the woman's healing, Antony reveals that she had been

⁵ Chapter 175, PG 87, col. 3044.

⁶ C. House, ed., Antony of Choziba, *Miracula Beatae Virginis in Choziba*, *AnalBoll* 7 (1888), 360–70. English translation in T. Vivian and A.N. Athanassakis, trans., Antony of Choziba, *The Life of Saint George of Choziba and the Miracles of the Most Holy Mother of God at Choziba* (San Francisco CA, 1994), 95–105. D. Olster ('The construction of a Byzantine saint: George of Choziba, holiness, and the pilgrimage trade in seventh-century Palestine', *GOThR* 38 [1993], 309–22) places the text within the larger context of the monastery's history. After the oil that exuded from the tomb of its founders dried up, the monastery at Choziba turned increasingly to Mary for patronage and protection. See Antony of Choziba, *Miracles of the Most Holy Mother at Choziba* 6.

⁷ For further discussion of this incident within the life of the monastery, see D. Krausmüller, 'God as impersonator of saints in late antique hagiography: the case of the *Life* of John bar Aphtonia (+ 537)', forthcoming in *Basilissa* 3 (2007). As it stands, the episode offers an aetiology for what, by the time of the text's composition, was an established practice of permitting – or even welcoming – women pilgrims into the monastic enclosure at Choziba.

a heretic who subsequently partook of the 'divine and sacred mysteries'. The Theotokos had thus cured her both bodily and spiritually, 'healing her soul from the deadly disease of heterodoxy'. Together with the story of Kosmiane, the noble woman's story emphasises Mary's ability to assist women in crossing sacred boundaries and to enforce women's orthodoxy.

In these stories, the Eucharistic elements figure as the antidote to heresy. In the late sixth- and early seventh-century eastern Mediterranean, the Eucharist itself was a primary and material boundary marker between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Christians. In Leontios of Neapolis's *Life of John the Almsgiver*, written in 641/2 and recounting events between 610 and 619, the patriarch of Alexandria issues a festal letter inveighing against contact with non-Chalcedonian Christians, and warns above all, 'never to take the Holy Communion with them, even if ... you remain without communicating all your life'. John implores his flock never to 'go near the oratories of the heretics in order to communicate there'.⁸ For their part, non-Chalcedonian Christians raised similar concerns.⁹ In John Moschos's and Antony of Choziba's texts, Mary thus interposes herself as the seal protecting heretical women's access to the Eucharist.

This is not to say that Mary was indifferent to male associations with heresy. In a narrative that precedes Moschos's account of Kosmiane, the Theotokos appears in a dream to a monk named Kyriakos, refusing to enter his cell. After he awoke, Kyriakos took up a scroll to read it and discovered in it 'two writings of the irreligious (δυσσεβοῦς) Nestorios. 'And immediately I knew that he was the enemy of our Lady, the holy Theotokos.'¹⁰ Here, Mary refuses to enter a space polluted by heresy, maintaining the limit between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Yet while she works to purge the monastic cell of pollution, she does not prevent the monk from crossing a threshold or boundary, but rather pulls him back from a limit that he has unknowingly already crossed.¹¹

The third story involving the Theotokos's role as gatekeeper for women in early seventh-century Palestinian texts is perhaps the most familiar. Indeed, the two earlier accounts provide a broader context for understanding a key event in the poetic and haunting *Life of Mary of Egypt*.¹² The manuscript

⁸ Leontios of Neapolis, *Life of John the Almsgiver*, in A.-J. Festugière, ed., *Léontios de Néapolis: Vie de Syméon le Fou et Vie de Jean de Chypre* 49 (Paris, 1974), 398–9; E. Dawes and N. Baynes, trans., *Three Byzantine Saints* (Crestwood NY, 1977), 251. See also V. Déroche, *Études sur Léontios de Néapolis* (Uppsala, 1995), 125.

⁹ See V. Menze, 'Priests, laity and the sacrament of the Eucharist in sixth century Syria', *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 7/2 (2004): <http://syrcom.cua.edu/Hugoye/Vol7No2/HV7N2Menze.html>

¹⁰ Chapter 46, PG 87, cols 2900–1.

¹¹ In the story immediately following, Mary punishes another sort of impiety, appearing in a vision to sever the hands and feet of a male actor in Heliopolis (Baalbek) who repeatedly blasphemed against her on the stage: see chapter 47, PG 87, col. 2901.

¹² *Life of Mary of Egypt*, PG 87, cols 3697–726. Trans. M. Kouli, in A.-M. Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* (Washington DC, 1996), 65–93. For an insightful reading of gender and sexuality in the *Life of Mary of Egypt*, see V. Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints: An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography* (Philadelphia PA,

tradition ascribes the text to Sophronios, patriarch of Jerusalem from 634 to 638 and John Moschos's companion in the monastic life for some forty years, although debate continues about whether this ascription is authentic.¹³ In the text, the Egyptian harlot's conversion occurs when she travels to Jerusalem and attempts to enter the church at Golgotha. She had arrived at the church on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on 14 September following the crowd not with pious intent, but 'hunting after the souls of young men' (22). 'I came with them to the courtyard of the church. When the time came for the divine Exaltation, I tried to join the crowd and force my way to the entrance.' But Mary of Egypt, who only a few lines earlier reported her great success in 'forcing' her travel companions to have sex with her 'against their will' (21), could not cross the threshold.

Eventually, with great trouble and grief – wretched woman that I am – I approached the door through which one entered the church where the life-giving cross was displayed. But as soon as I stepped on the threshold of the door (τὴν φλιάν τῆς θύρας ἐπάτησα), all the other people entered unhindered (ἀκωλύτως), while some kind of divine power held me back (ἐμὲ δὲ θεία τις ἐκώλυσεν δύναμις), not allowing me to pass through the entrance. (22)

At first, the source of this 'divine power' is vague; it is unclear what is preventing her entrance. The woman tried again:

I mingled with other people and pushed with all possible strength, shoving my elbows and forcing myself inside. But I tried in vain ... from the moment my wretched foot stepped on the threshold (φλιά), though the church received the others without any obstacle, it (the church?) refused entrance to me alone, miserable woman. (22)

Again, 'some kind of overwhelming power' held her back (22). As in Moschos's story of the ram, multiple attempts to enter the sacred space resulted in failure. After three or four attempts, Mary says, 'I no longer had the strength to push and be pushed back, for my body was exhausted as a result of my violent effort' (23). Giving up, Mary 'went back and stood at the corner of the courtyard of the church' (23).

Only then did I realize the cause which prevented me from laying eyes on the life-giving cross, for a salvific word (λόγος σωτήριος) touched the eyes of my heart, showing me that it was the filth of my deeds¹⁴ that was barring the entrance to me. (23)

2004), 147–55.

¹³ See Kouli, in Talbot, *Holy Women of Byzantium*, 66.

¹⁴ Ὁ βόρβορος τῶν ἔργων μου. Compare *Akathistos Hymn* 9.13 in C.A. Trypanis, ed., *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica* (Vienna, 1968), 33: χαίρε, ἡ τοῦ βορβόρου ἡνομένη τῶν ἔργων; and the refrain to Romanos's hymn, *On the Sinful Woman*, in P. Maas and C.A. Trypanis, eds, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica: Cantica Genuina* (Oxford, 1963), 73–9: τοῦ βορβόρου τῶν ἔργων μου.

Here, Mary of Egypt identifies the countervailing force as her own sins, although this creates some tension with her earlier declaration about a 'divine force' or an 'overwhelming power'. As in the stories of Kosmiane and the noble woman at Choziba, only the Theotokos can permit her entry. With great contrition, Mary of Egypt began to repent, crying, lamenting and beating her breast (23). As she was crying, she saw the icon of the all-holy Theotokos standing above the place where she stood.¹⁵ In her prayer of supplication to this 'Virgin Lady (Παρθένε Δέσποινα)', she contrasts herself, who is 'filthy and entirely unsavable (πανάσωτον: also "prodigal")' with the ever-virginal Mary, who is 'chaste, pure, and undefiled in body and soul' (23). 'God Whom thou gavest birth became human ... to summon sinners to repentance'. The Theotokos stands at or as the gate of repentance. As in the cases of the heretical women, the Theotokos concerns herself not only with the purity of the shrine but also with the purity of the woman's body. Invoking the Virgin as the guarantor of her salvation, Mary of Egypt renounces her own penetrability: 'I shall no longer insult this flesh by any shameful intercourse (μιξίς) whatsoever, but from the moment I look upon the wood of Thy Son's cross, I shall immediately renounce the world and all worldly things' (23). Whereupon Mary of Egypt reports that she received the 'fire of faith' as 'a kind of assurance' (24):

And being encouraged by the compassion of the Theotokos, I moved from that place where I stood praying, and returned to join those people who were entering [the church]. No longer did anyone push me this way and that, nor did anyone prevent me from approaching the door through which they entered the church. (24)

Filled with fear and trembling, she 'reached the door that until then had been barred to me, as if all the force (δύναμις) that previously held me back was now preparing the way for my entrance. In this way, I entered without any effort' (24). The Theotokos, it seems, held the real power both to prevent and to permit access to the church and to salvation. No longer a barrier, the Theotokos becomes a guide (ὁδηγός) on 'the path that leads to repentance' (25, compare 26). Marking the boundary between sin and redemption, the Theotokos facilitates Mary of Egypt's entry into new life.

¹⁵ For the popularity of images of the Theotokos in the period (or perhaps later – the text is heavily interpolated), see also John Moschos, *Spiritual Meadow* 45 and 180. In the first of these (45), a recluse on the Mount of Olives struggled persistently with the demon of *porneia* who demanded that he desist from his veneration of an icon that 'bore the likeness (ἐκτύπωμα) of our Lady, the holy Theotokos Mary, carrying our Lord Jesus Christ'. An elder advised him, 'it were better for you to leave no brothel (πορνείον) in the town unentered than to diminish reverence from our Lord Jesus Christ and from his mother'. The second (180) relates another story of an icon of the Virgin 'holding our God in her arms' in a monk's cell. Here Abba John the Anchorite would light a lamp and pray to the Theotokos before he travelled. No matter how long the trip, the lamp was always still burning when he returned.

These stories emphasising Mary's protective properties at the doors and gates of Palestinian monasteries, churches and shrines appear in texts written by male monks, and may reveal male monastic anxieties about the presence of women at places along the heavily travelled pilgrims' route. They also cohere with the increasingly prominent cult of Mary in Palestine. These stories postdate the expansion of Marian observances beyond the feast of the Memorial or Dormition (Koimesis) of Mary in Palestine during the sixth century, to include feasts of the Annunciation, Nativity of Mary and the Presentation of Mary.¹⁶ They place Mary at the Church of the Anastasis and at Golgotha, and in the Judean Desert, adding to Mary's more specific association with other sites on the Holy Land itinerary, such as the fifth-century Kathisma Church on the way between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and the fifth- or sixth-century tomb of Mary next to the Garden of Gethsemane.¹⁷ Together with the icon of Mary at Golgotha, central to the penitence of Mary of Egypt, these stories strengthen associations between the cult of Mary and sites more associated with her son, specifically with his death and Resurrection.

Mary's position at the threshold, as a guardian, augments other aspects of her relationship with space and spaces, including Mary as temple, garden and ark.¹⁸ Ancient Christians often associated Mary with her virginal womb, a space that had contained the body of God and continued to house Christ's body in the form of the church. In *The Body and Society*, Peter Brown showed how for Ambrose the concavity of Mary's virginal womb figured as 'a royal hall of undamaged chastity'.¹⁹ This synecdochical identification of Mary with her womb figured Mary enveloping the church and keeping it integral and inviolate. Our stories, however, recall a related but contrasting set of metaphors that identify Mary not with space but with the boundary or limit demarcating space. These traditions figured Mary not as a hall, room or church building, but as a gate, door or threshold. Recalling Ezekiel 44:2, this strand of Marian piety acclaimed the Theotokos an 'unopened gate', and by further association, identified Mary as a gatekeeper, permitting ingress to space.²⁰

The *Akathistos Hymn* hails Mary as 'opener of the doors of Paradise (παράδεισου θυρῶν ἀνοικτήριον)' (7.9) and the one 'through whom Paradise was opened (δι' ἧς ἠνοιχθη παράδεισος)' (15.15). She is also the 'door of hallowed mystery (σεπτοῦ μυστηρίου θύρα)' (15.7). In this manner, Mary is the portal

¹⁶ On these see S. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford, 2002), 116.

¹⁷ Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions*, 81–107; for the later date, see R. Avner, 'The initial tradition of the Theotokos at the Kathisma: earliest celebrations and the calendar', above, 9–29.

¹⁸ See, for example, M. van Esbroeck, 'The Virgin as the true Ark of the Covenant', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), 63–8. See also Cameron, 'The cult of the Virgin', 8–10.

¹⁹ P. Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 1988), 354.

²⁰ See N. Constatas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Homilies 1–5, Texts and Translations* (Leiden, 2003), 64–5, 131–3, 147.

through whom God enters into humanity in the Incarnation, and through whom humanity enters into salvation.²¹ Her role as 'door of the hallowed mystery' may also be a reference to the Eucharist, an access to the divine that depends on mutual boundary crossing, as communicants enter into the body of God by allowing God's body to enter into them.

The image of Mary as door also features in Romanos's *Hymn on the Nativity*, where Mary's opening of the door to receive the Magi allows the poet to remark on a profound paradox:

She opens the door (θύρα) – she the unopened
gate (πύλη) through which Christ alone has passed.
She opens the door – she who was opened
and yet in no way robbed of the treasure of her purity.
She opened the door, she from whom was born the door,
a little child, God before the ages. (1.9)²²

In this way Mary figures not as sacred space or womb but as the membrane separating the sacred and the profane, the pure and the polluted. Like her hymen, this boundary can be permeated without being violated, and thus the membrane both divides and joins the divine and the human, creator and creation.

The stories recounted by Moschos, Antony, and in the *Life of Mary of Egypt* place the Theotokos at the threshold, a penetrable barrier protecting sacred space. As such, she demarcates boundaries between heresy and orthodoxy, male and female, sin and redemption. Serving to guard the body of God from corruption, she both prevents and permits access to the holy. But she does so especially to regulate the passage of women. Perhaps male permeation of her hymen would exceed her limits.²³

²¹ L.M. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn* (Leiden, 2001), 128–34, 158, 182–5.

²² Maas and Trypanis, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica*, 4; trans. E. Lash, *Kontakia: On the Life of Christ* (San Francisco CA, [1995]), 6.

²³ I suspect that these accounts can provide a broader context for the more famous miracle that the Virgin performed in Constantinople in 626, preventing the Avars and Persians from entering the city. Here too Mary is guardian and protectress of space. These stories may also shed light on the relative popularity of Mary on lead seals already in the sixth and seventh centuries, guaranteeing that written correspondence has arrived unadulterated at its destination. J. Cotsonis, 'The contribution of Byzantine lead seals to the study of the cult of the saints (sixth-twelfth century)', *Byzantion* 75 (2005), 383–497, esp. 400–4.

Body, Clothing, Metaphor: The Virgin in Early Byzantine Art

Henry Maguire

My aim in this chapter is to consider depictions of the motherhood of the Virgin in the period before iconoclasm, primarily in the sixth and seventh centuries. I will be arguing that in pre-iconoclastic art, in contrast to medieval Byzantine art, the images of the Virgin as mother were more about the natures of Christ than about the veneration of the Virgin herself.

The chapter will have three parts. The topic of the first will be the portrayal of the physical pregnancy of Mary, which became especially pronounced in sixth- and seventh-century scenes of the Visitation and the Journey to Bethlehem. The counterpart to this development in art was the homiletic literature that expanded upon the theme of the Virgin's pregnancy, which, of course, was the first visible evidence of Christ's Incarnation.

The second part of my chapter will look at a possible artistic portrayal of a relic that evidenced the conception and birth of Christ, namely the garment of the Virgin, preserved at the Blachernai.

Finally, I will briefly discuss the new symbolic language employed by artists of the sixth and seventh centuries to express the idea of the Incarnation through Mary. This visual symbolism also had its counterpart in church literature, in hymns and sermons.

Body

In the sixth and seventh centuries a new scene from Christ's life became popular both in monumental church art and in smaller scale domestic objects, namely the Visitation. The most prominent of these Visitation images is the mid-sixth century mosaic on the south wall of the apse of the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč, in Istria (Plates 3.1 and 3.2).¹ In the Eufrasiana, the

¹ A. Terry and H. Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč* (2 vols, University Park, PA, 2007), vol. 1, 102–4, 173–4; vol. 2, figures 126–33.

Visitation was one of only two narrative scenes in the mosaics, the other being the Annunciation, which appears opposite the Visitation on the north wall of the apse (Plate 3.3).² Until recently these mosaics, like all the early mosaics in the Eufrasiana, had been under a cloud. An extensive restoration of the mosaics took place at the end of the nineteenth century, and this intervention cast doubt on the authenticity of the images that can be seen today. However, recent examination from scaffolding has shown that the Visitation mosaic at Poreč was only lightly restored – its iconography is completely genuine.³

In the mosaic, both the Virgin and Elizabeth exhibit the physical signs of their pregnancies (Plate 3.2). Their breasts are enlarged, and their bellies are heavily swollen – more so in the case of Elizabeth, on the right, as according to Luke’s gospel she is six months further into her term.⁴

The interest in the physical pregnancies of Mary and Elizabeth that we see expressed here had appeared earlier in church literature. Already in the letter to Eupychios by Attikos, the early-fifth-century bishop of Constantinople, the Virgin’s pregnancy appears as proof of the Incarnation: ‘The body of our Lord is not from another place, and its existence is not in the imagination, as some of those who deny it have liked [to maintain]. In effect, if it was a hallucination, how did it grow in the innards of the Virgin?’⁵ Another fifth-century author, Hesychios of Jerusalem, devoted a sermon to the conception of John the Baptist, in which he described graphically how the foetus of the saint leaped in his mother’s womb as she greeted the Virgin:

His mother’s belly was not able to restrain the little infant, her womb could not enclose the prophet ... The moment had not come, no less had the childbirth arrived, the labour was not yet present, the months had not been accomplished, when the babe without a voice spoke to the Child, using his leaps as flutes; he kicked against his mother’s womb as if it were a drum, he struck against his mother’s belly as if it were a cymbal.⁶

This vivid passage is echoed, in a less baroque form, in the *Akathistos Hymn*, in which the unborn John the Baptist is presented as speaking through his movements in his mother’s womb. ‘The Virgin, holding God in her womb, hastened to Elizabeth. And Elizabeth’s little child knew at once her embrace,

² Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, vol. 1, 100–2, 168–70; vol. 2, figures 97–106, 300.

³ Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, vol. 1, 102–4, 173–4.

⁴ Lk 1:36.

⁵ M. Brière, ‘Une homélie inédite d’Atticus, patriarche de Constantinople (406–425)’, *ROC* 9 (1933–4), 378–424, esp. 422. Cited by N. Constatas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 2003), 33–4. For this reference, I am indebted to Andrea Olsen.

⁶ *Homilia XVI, In Conceptionem Praecursoris*, 3; ed. M. Aubineau, *Les homélies festales d’Hésychius de Jérusalem*, *Subsidia hagiographica* 58–9 (2 vols, Brussels 1980), vol. 2, 670.

and rejoiced, and with leaps like songs cried to the mother of God: <Hail, vine of the unwithered shoot ... >'.⁷

A similar concern with the physical facts of pregnancy can be found in an encomium of John the Baptist written in the seventh century by Sophronios, the patriarch of Jerusalem. Sophronios highlights the pregnancies of both Elizabeth and the Virgin. First he describes how the embryo of John the Baptist, while still in the womb, performed a series of callisthenic exercises when his mother greeted the Virgin at the Visitation:

Then the sixth month arrived, and with it arrived the Virgin bearing the Uncreated One who had been created in her womb. In the sixth month [of Elizabeth's pregnancy], she [the Virgin] conceives Him who made the cosmos in six days, and who on the sixth day created man ... But John was no longer able to continue keeping his silence ... For he cried out through his leaps ... He stretched out his finger and indicated the lamb of God ... he extended both his hands, and thus proclaimed the trophy of the cross, which He who was present in the womb of the Virgin came to set up against demons. He stood straight upright, and through this posture mystically sounded the resurrection of all from Hades, which He who was then concealed in [his mother's] unsown womb was to display when he would be concealed in the tomb.⁸

Sophronios goes on to describe the womb as a physical barrier, subjecting both John and Christ to the laws of nature:

And forthwith [John] struggled against his mother, because she impeded him with physical fetters from being allowed to shout out such things ... Thus the time of his birth arrived [for John], who had seen the Creator dwelling with him for three more months, and yet being restrained by the same laws of nature. For the Virgin, who was pregnant with [Christ] stayed with Elizabeth for the three months ... And so he is born, by the disposition of the God who is still concealed in the Virgin's womb.⁹

In these sermons, then, the pregnancies of Elizabeth and the Virgin bear witness to the Incarnation and ensuing salvation. But what was the reason for the sudden prominence of the Visitation in the mosaics at Poreč? As we have seen, in the Eufrosiana, the Visitation, on the south wall of the apse, is a pendant to the Annunciation, which is displayed in the corresponding location on the north side, and these are the only narrative scenes that were shown in the mosaics (Plates 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3). André Grabar suggested that the embrace of the two parents, Mary and Elizabeth, was a reference to the conception of Christ.¹⁰ But we can perhaps be more specific, and propose that

⁷ C.A. Trypanis, ed., *The Penguin Book of Greek Verse* (Harmondsworth, 1971), 377.

⁸ *Oratio VII, Encomium in S. Joannem Baptistam*; PG 87.3, col. 3341 C–D.

⁹ *Ibid.*, PG 87.3, cols 3341D, 3344D.

¹⁰ A. Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of its Origins* (London, 1969), 131. On the Visitation scene as an indicator of the Incarnation, see also D. Milinović, 'Le programme iconographique de la mosaïque de l'abside centrale de la basilique d'Euphrasius de Poreč en Croatie: le patronage de l'empereur et le rôle de la Theotokos', in *Romanité et*

we have here a contrast between two types of conception: first, the spiritual, or miraculous, conception, that is evidenced by the reception of the angel's message in the Annunciation, and second, the physical conception, that is evidenced by the bodies of the two women in the Visitation mosaic. Thus the two scenes express, on the horizontal axis of the apse, the paradox of the two natures of the incarnate Christ. Such an antithesis, of the divine and the human conception, is set out in the Letter to Euppsychios by Attikos. Attikos says that John 'came from the woman who was sterile, while God came from the Virgin, two prodigies side by side, even though they are not similar ... For the one, as a temple, conceives the prophet, while the other, as the heavens, receives God.' Attikos goes on to observe that Gabriel made his announcement to the woman, Mary, in the one case, and to the man, Zacharias, in the other, rather than to the two men, Joseph and Zacharias, or to the two women, Mary and Elizabeth. The reason for this difference between the two annunciations is that Joseph had no part in the birth of Mary's child, which came about 'by the power of God which overshadowed her' and 'is not subject to the law of nature', while Zacharias, as a natural father, was indeed the cause of the conception of John the Baptist.¹¹

The dogma of Christ's two natures is also portrayed on the vertical axis of the apse (Plate 3.1). Here we see Christ portrayed twice, once above on the triumphal arch flanked by his apostles in his heavenly glory, and a second time below in the semi-dome sitting as a child in the lap of his mother.¹² In this instance, the restorers may have been guilty of reducing the impact of the contrast between the Christ-Child and the mature man, because there is some evidence the Christ of the triumphal arch may originally have been bearded, as at San Michele in Africisco in Ravenna.¹³

The pregnancies of the two women were also depicted in Visitation scenes appearing on domestic objects at this time. For example, a sixth- or seventh-century gold pendant portrays Christ blessing a bridal pair on its obverse side, while the reverse of the medallion shows the Annunciation above two smaller images of the Visitation, on the left, and the Nativity, on the right (Plate 3.4).¹⁴ In the Visitation, Elizabeth, the woman without a halo on the right, is clearly more advanced in her pregnancy, just as she is portrayed in the mosaic at Poreč. On such objects of personal apparel the force of the imagery may be more magical than doctrinal – to ensure healthy pregnancy and childbirth for the wearer.

cité chrétienne. Mélanges en l'honneur d'Yvette Duval (Paris, 2000), 359–70, esp. 362, 368.

¹¹ Brière, 'Une homélie inédite d'Atticus', 421–2. Cited by Constanas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 33–4.

¹² J. Maksimović, 'Iconografija i program mozaika u Poreču', *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta, Srpska Akademija Nauka* 8, 2 (1964), 246–62; K. Corrigan, 'The witness of John the Baptist on an early Byzantine icon in Kiev', *DOP* 42 (1988), 1–11, especially 5; Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, vol. 1, 137–9; vol. 2, figures 2, 6.

¹³ Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, vol. 1, 54, 138–9; vol. 2, figures 2, 220, 243.

¹⁴ M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art. Exhibition Catalogue, Benaki Museum* (Athens and Milan, 2000), 290–1.

Besides the Visitation, another scene in which sixth-century artists emphasised the Virgin's pregnancy was the Journey to Bethlehem. The portrayal on the ivory throne of Maximian at Ravenna is particularly striking in its depiction of Mary's swollen belly, and of her tiredness as she leans on Joseph's shoulder for support (Plate 3.5).¹⁵ As at Poreč, the ivory panel displays a contrasting scene that restores the conceptual balance of the two natures, for above an angel reassures the sleeping Joseph that the conception is divine. The evocation of the Virgin's tiredness, as a proof of Christ's physical birth, can also be found in certain early medieval portrayals of the Nativity. In the fresco at Castelseprio, the new mother lies back on her mattress, as if exhausted by the labour (Plate 3.6).¹⁶ She adopts a similar, but less prone position in the Nativity scene carved at the base of the sixth-century ivory panel with the Adoration of the Magi now in the British Museum.¹⁷

The theological import of the Virgin's pregnancy is also displayed on another sixth-century work, a pair of ivories now in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris (Plates 3.7 and 3.8). The diptych juxtaposes the enthroned Ancient of Days side by side with the infant Christ in the arms of his mother.¹⁸ Here, the principal figures are surrounded by subsidiary scenes, which exemplify the distinction between the two natures of Christ. On one wing of the diptych, the Ancient of Days is accompanied by scenes of Christ's miracles, which are indications of his divine nature (Plate 3.7). On the other wing, the infant Christ is flanked by scenes of his conception and gestation in the womb, including the Annunciation, Joseph's Accusations, the Visitation and the Journey to Bethlehem (Plate 3.8). In the last scene, the Virgin is shown heavily pregnant, just as on Maximian's throne.

Clothing

By the mid-sixth century, Constantinople possessed a major item of the Virgin's attire, the relic of her garment which was preserved in a chapel at the Blachernai. The precise nature of this piece of clothing is hard to pin down, because the texts are vague concerning its identity, but it was agreed to have miraculous and protective properties.¹⁹ In Greek writers the Virgin's garment as a relic with protective powers is referred to as *esthes* (clothing),²⁰

¹⁵ W.F. Volbach, *Early Christian Art* (London, 1961), 356, pl. 230.

¹⁶ Grabar, *Christian Iconography*, 130, figure 312.

¹⁷ Volbach, *Early Christian Art*, 355, pl. 222.

¹⁸ A. Cutler, 'The Mother of God in ivory', in Vassilaki, *Mother of God*, 167–75, esp. 167–9, pls 107–8.

¹⁹ C. Mango, 'The origins of the Blachernae shrine at Constantinople', *Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae, Split–Poreč, 1994* (Vatican, 1998), vol. 2, 61–75, esp. 67–9.

²⁰ C. Loparev, ed., 'Theodore Synkellos, *In depositionem pretiosae vestis* 12–13', *VV 22* (1895), 603–7; P. Maas, *Frühbyzantinische Kirchenpoesie* (Bonn, 1910), vol. 1, 31, strophe 15; *De translatione cinguli dei genitricis*, ed. F. Combefis in *Historia haeresis monotheletarum*

as *maphorion* (veil),²¹ and as *peristolia* (wrap)²² and in Latin as *pallium* (cloak).²³ In the sixth century women commonly wore a tunic (*chiton*), over which they might drape a mantle. Sometimes they also wore a veil over the head.²⁴ In Byzantine texts we do find reference to the Virgin's *chiton*, or tunic, but not, to my knowledge, in association with the miraculous garment preserved at Constantinople. Thus a sermon on the translation of the relic of the Virgin's belt (*zone*), attributed to various authors, describes how the belt bound the Virgin's *chiton* tightly, and restrained it from spreading heedlessly by holding it in place.²⁵ Portrayals of the Annunciation in early Byzantine art illustrate the Virgin's tunic being held by her belt in such a manner. For example, in the late sixth- or early seventh-century miniature of the Codex Etschmiadzin, the Virgin's belt is a simple gold band, which binds her purple tunic in the manner described by the sermon (Plate 3.9).²⁶ Thus the Byzantines imagined the Virgin's tunic as a piece of clothing that was restrained by her belt. However, the legends and imagery of the Virgin's garment as a miraculous object suggest that it was visualised as a covering mantle or a veil, rather than as a constrained tunic. At the end of the sixth century, Gregory of Tours related a miracle that had occurred in the mid-sixth century, during the episcopacy of Menas. In this incident, a young Jewish boy was thrown into a furnace by his father for taking mass with some Christian boys. But he was unhurt by the flames, because, as he explained: 'The woman who was sitting on the throne in that church where I received the bread from the table and who was cradling a young boy in her lap covered me with her cloak (*pallium*), so that the fire did not devour me.'²⁷ It is much easier to visualise the Virgin using her outer mantle, or her veil, for such a purpose than her tunic. Byzantine authors writing about the relic at the Blachernai used the image of the Virgin's garment covering the city of Constantinople or even the whole earth,²⁸ this also was a concept better suited to a mantle or a veil than to a tunic. Therefore,

(Paris, 1648), 790–95. See also Evagrius, *Historia ecclesiastica* IV, 36 (PG 86.2, col. 2769B).

²¹ A.-J. Festugière, ed., *Vie de Théodore de Sykéôn*, Subsidia hagiographica 48 (2 vols, Brussels, 1970), vol. 1, 103, ch. 128.

²² Theophylact Simocatta, *Historiae* VIII, 5, 1; C. de Boor (ed.) and P. Wirth (rev. edn), *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae* (Stuttgart, 1972), 291.

²³ *Gregorii Turonis opera*, Bk I, 9; W. Arndt and Br. Krusch, eds, *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum merovingicarum* (Hannover, 1885), vol. 1, part 2, 494.

²⁴ The three garments can be clearly distinguished in the sixth-century wall-painting of Theodosia from her tomb at Antinoopolis; see M.-H. Rutschowskaya, *Coptic Fabrics* (Paris, 1990), 48–58, with figure on p. 51.

²⁵ *De translatione cinguli dei genitricis*, ed. Combefis, *Historia haeresis monotheletarum*, 795. Compare John Chrysostom describing how artfully dancers restrained their tunics with belts: *In Epistulam ad Timotheum, Homilia VIII*; PG 62, col. 542. I thank Ruth Webb for this reference.

²⁶ *Codex Etschmiadzin, Codices selecti* 105 (Graz, 1999), fol. 228v; Heide and Helmut Buschhausen, *Codex Etschmiadzin, Kommentar* (Graz, 2001), 111.

²⁷ *Gregorii Turonis opera*, Bk I, 9; Arndt and Krusch, eds, 494.; trans. R. Van Dam, *Gregory of Tours, Glory of the Martyrs* (Liverpool, 1988), 30.

²⁸ Maas, *Frühbyzantinische Kirchenpoesie*, vol. 1, 31, strophe 15; *De translatione cinguli dei genitricis*, ed. Combefis, *Historia haeresis monotheletarum*, 790–95.

it seems that the Byzantines envisioned the garment in the Blachernai as a covering that she wore on top of her tunic, rather than as the tunic itself.

The church at the Blachernai, where the relic of the Virgin's mantle or veil was kept, had probably been founded, or completed, by the empress Verina in the 470s.²⁹ A large basilica was later constructed at the Blachernai by Justin I, and this church was restored by Justin II.³⁰ The story of the garment's transport to Constantinople from Palestine by the two patricians Galbius and Candidus seems to have been known already in the sixth century.³¹ As we have seen, the repute of the cloth's miraculous powers had reached Gaul by the end of the sixth century, when Gregory of Tours related the miracle of the boy in the furnace.

The relic itself was first described by Theodore Synkellos in a sermon delivered in 624 or 625. According to Theodore, when the Patriarch Sergios opened the reliquary casket that contained the garment, he found that the precious relic was wrapped up in an imperial cloth of purple silk. But the Virgin's garment itself was plainer, being woven of wool of one colour – he says: 'both warp and weft the same wool of the same colour'.³² Thus Theodore Synkellos saw a contrast between the monochrome cloth of the relic and the imperial silk.

A counterpart in art to Theodore's description of the relic occurs in the mosaic of the Annunciation on the north side of the apse of the Eufrasiana at Poreč (Plate 3.3). The costume of the Virgin in this mosaic is extremely unusual. In the mosaic as it exists today, the Virgin wears a long purple tunic decorated with two gold bands that descend from her shoulders to her feet. As in other early medieval portrayals of the Annunciation, such as the miniature in the Codex Etschmiadzin (Plate 3.9), the Virgin's tunic is bound by a belt worn high up, just beneath the breasts. In the mosaic, the belt is now somewhat hard to make out, partly because of the overlying veil, and partly because of the restorations. The belt is wider at the centre than at the sides (Plate 3.10). It is composed of original olive-green cubes, mostly still set in their original plaster. The belt is decorated with pearls made of large greyish-white tesserae. It can be seen to pass over the gold bands of the Virgin's tunic on either side. Over both her tunic and her belt the Virgin wears a curious light blue diaphanous veil that covers the top and back of her head and also the upper part of her body as far down as her waist. The pale blue stripes of the diaphanous veil pass through the tesserae of the belt, indicating that the veil is on top (Plate 3.10). This strange-looking transparent veil cannot be matched in other surviving images of the Annunciation from this period, which, as in the case of the Codex Etschmiadzin (Plate 3.9) show the Virgin's

²⁹ W. Lackner, 'Ein byzantinisches Marienmirakel', *Byzantina* 13, 2 (1985), 833–60, esp. 843–4; C. Mango, 'Constantinople as Theotokoupolis', in Vassilaki, *Mother of God*, 17–25, esp. 19.

³⁰ Mango, 'Origins of the Blachernae shrine', 64.

³¹ Mango, 'Origins of the Blachernae shrine', 70–1.

³² *In depositionem pretiosae vestis* 11–12; ed. Loparev, 603–4. Translation in A. Cameron, 'The Virgin's robe: an episode in the history of early seventh-century Constantinople', *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 42–56, esp. 53.

head covered by her mantle, but not by a transparent waist-length veil. The veil at Poreč is unique.

The panel with the Annunciation is one of the most heavily renewed mosaics in the Eufrasiana, as two different firms of restorers worked on it, one after the other – it was, effectively, restored twice.³³ Nevertheless, many of its details are authentic. Most importantly for this discussion, the blue tesserae that delineate the transparent veil as it covers the Virgin's hair and upper body are primarily old, and a significant proportion of them is still set in the original sixth-century plaster bed.³⁴ So this strange-looking garment cannot be dismissed simply as an invention of the restorers. It is necessary to find other reasons for its idiosyncratic appearance.

One possible explanation is to see the Virgin's veil at Poreč as an illustration of a contemporary item of clothing that was actually worn by women during the early Byzantine period. Similar veils, loosely woven so that their fabric is transparent, have been found in early medieval burials in Egypt. Plate 3.11 illustrates an example dated to the seventh century, which is currently divided between the Choron collection and the Abegg-Stiftung near Bern.³⁵

A second explanation is to set the distinctive appearance of the Virgin's veil into the context of the growing veneration of the actual relic of the Virgin's garment. We have seen that medieval writers conceived of the Virgin's miraculous garment as a mantle or a veil rather than as a tunic. The Virgin in the Annunciation mosaic wears her plain light blue veil over a rich purple and gold tunic, a contrast that calls to mind Theodore Synkellos's description of the actual relic of the Virgin's garment as a plain monochrome cloth that was wrapped in an imperial purple silk. It is, then, possible that the mosaic in the Eufrasiana consciously references the surviving relic of the veil as well as the clothing that the Virgin once wore at the time of the Annunciation.

Both the actual garment of the Virgin – that is, the relic – and depictions of this object in art, played a theological role in demonstrating the Incarnation of Christ, by making reference to his birth and nurturing. Thus Theodore Synkellos not only describes the object in some detail, as we have seen, but he also evokes the context of its original use. Theodore explains the special significance of the relic as evidence for the physical facts of the Incarnation. 'How likely it was,' he says, 'that this divine and holy garment should partake of grace, when we believe that it not only clothed the Mother of God, but that in it she actually wrapped the Word of God himself when he was a little child and gave him milk.'³⁶

³³ Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, vol. 1, 39–43, 168–70; vol. 2, figures 97–106, 300.

³⁴ Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, vol. 1, 101, 169.

³⁵ A. Stauffer, *Spätantike und koptische Wirkereien* (Bern, 1992), 238–39, no. 60, pl. 31; E. Dauterman Maguire, *The Rich Life and the Dance: Weavings from Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic Egypt* (Urbana, IL, 1999), 71, no. A27. Theodosia, in her portrait at Antinoopolis, wears such a light-weight veil: Rutschowscaya, *Coptic Fabrics*, figure on p. 51.

³⁶ *In depositionem pretiosae vestis* 13; ed. Loparev, 605–6; trans. Cameron, 'The Virgin's robe', 53–4. There is a close parallel to this passage in the Georgian translation of

The importance of the Virgin's garment, therefore, was that it provided a tangible contact with, and proof of, the humanity of Christ. The same theme recurs in the sermons devoted to the Virgin's belt, which was also preserved as a relic in Constantinople, in the church at the Chalkoprateia.³⁷ A homily *On the Belt of St. Mary* by Germanos, the early eighth-century patriarch of Constantinople, praises 'that belt which girdled that all holy body [of the Virgin] and enclosed God hidden in her womb ... that belt which oftentimes was enriched with pure drops of milk from the pure one'.³⁸

Another sermon on the translation of the Virgin's belt lauds both the Virgin's garment and her belt with similar language:

Let us venerate the clothing of her who covered the heavens with her admirable virtue, and covered the earth with the immensity of her grace! Let us venerate the belt of her who girdled our nature with justice, fortitude and truth ... O truly precious and most excellent belt, which wrapped around the loins of her who was pregnant with the Emmanuel ... ! Both [the belt and the clothing] then covered the most divine Jesus as an infant, and on many occasions absorbed drops of that life-giving milk with which he was milked, and as many times were newly sanctified.³⁹

Such passages demonstrate that in the early Byzantine period the robe and garment of the Virgin, both the relics themselves and their depictions in art, were manifest evidence of the Incarnation.⁴⁰

the *Life of the Virgin*, which probably dates to the seventh century in spite of its uncertain attribution to Maximus the Confessor: M.-J. van Esbroeck, *Maxime le Confesseur, Vie de la Vierge*, CSCO, Scriptorum Iberici 22 (Leuven, 1986), vol. 2, 109; S.J. Shoemaker, 'The Virgin Mary in the ministry of Jesus and the early Church according to the earliest *Life of the Virgin*', *HTR* 98, 4 (2005), 441–67, esp. 444, 456; *idem*, 'A mother's passion: Mary at the Crucifixion and Resurrection in the earliest *Life of the Virgin* and its influence on George of Nikomedeia's Passion homilies', 53–67 below.

³⁷ Mango, 'Constantinople as Theotokoupolis', 19.

³⁸ *In S. Mariae zonam*, PG 98, col. 376B; trans. M.B. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven: Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood NY, 2008), 247–55.

³⁹ *De translatione cinguli dei genitricis*, ed. Combefis, *Historia haeresis monotheletarum*, 790–3, 798. See A. Weyl Carr, 'Threads of authority: the Virgin Mary's veil in the Middle Ages', in S. Gordon, ed., *Robes and Honor: the Medieval World of Investiture* (New York, 2001), 59–93, esp. 62, n. 21.

⁴⁰ On the Virgin's veil as symbol of the Incarnation in later Byzantine and Western medieval art, see H. Papastavrou, 'Le voile, symbole de l'incarnation: contribution à une étude sémantique', *Cahiers archéologiques* 41 (1993), 141–68; Carr, 'Threads of authority', esp. 64. On the later incorporation of fragments of the Virgin's garment and belt into the Limburg Staurothek in the tenth century, see N.P. Ševčenko, 'The Limburg Staurothek and its relics', in *Thymiama ste mneme tes Laskarinas Mpoura* (2 vols, Athens, 1994), vol. 1, 289–94, esp. 291.

Metaphor

In addition to such tangible proof as was provided by the Virgin's physical pregnancy and clothing, the Incarnation was evoked through symbols, or metaphors. In the third, and final part of my chapter, I shall turn to Poreč again for spectacular examples of two of these symbols, namely pearls and shells. One of the most conspicuous, and unusual, features of the mosaics in the Eufrasiana is the row of nine golden shells executed in mosaic accompanied by 14 great discs of mother of pearl that separate the lowest register of the decoration from the inscription beneath the apse vault (Plate 3.12).⁴¹ This striking combination of real and fictive shells is certainly unusual in the decoration of Christian apses, and therefore invites interpretation beyond that of mere ornament.

Like many motifs in early Byzantine art, shells had the potential to be interpreted symbolically in several ways. Most obviously, they were symbols of water, and thus they commonly featured in the decoration of baptisteries.⁴² But in the early Byzantine period, shells also symbolised the birth of Christ from the Virgin. Hesychios of Jerusalem, in a sermon on the Virgin as Mother of God, addressed Christ saying, 'if you are the pearl, then she [the Virgin] must be the case'.⁴³ Elsewhere Hesychios describes the Virgin as 'the container whose pearl is more brilliant than the sun'.⁴⁴ Similar images can be found in the sermons of Proklos of Constantinople. In a homily on the Annunciation he wrote: 'How will I dare to search out the depths of the virginal sea, and find the great mystery hidden therein, if you do not instruct me, O Mother of God? ... Only then, shining with the light of your mercy, shall I find within you the pearl of truth.'⁴⁵

This image of the Incarnation, of the Logos coming forth from the Virgin as a shining pearl from a shining shell, may also be illustrated in the miniature of the Adoration of the Magi in the Etschmiadzin Gospels. Here the shell-headed niche behind the Virgin seems almost to become an extension of her body which produces the Christ child at its centre (Plate 3.13).⁴⁶ But in this

⁴¹ Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, vol. 2, figures 140–53.

⁴² For example, the Orthodox Baptistry in Ravenna, where a row of stucco shells surrounds the interior wall: F.W. Deichmann, *Frühchristliche Bauten und Mosaiken von Ravenna* (Baden-Baden, 1958), pls 72–9.

⁴³ *Homilia V, De S. Maria Deipara*, 3, ed. M. Aubineau, *Les homélies festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem, Subsidia hagiographica*, 59 (2 vols, Brussels 1980), vol. 1, 164. Cited in A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991), 168.

⁴⁴ *Homilia V, De S. Maria Deipara* 1, ed. Aubineau, *Les homélies festales*, vol. 1, 158.

⁴⁵ *In sanctissimae Deiparae Annuntiationem* 4, PG 85, col. 436A. For the translation and the attribution to Proklos, see N.P. Constanas, 'Weaving the body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the Theotokos and the loom of the flesh', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3, 2 (1995), 169–94, esp. 177, n. 27. Proklos also describes the Virgin as the 'pearl hidden in the abyss of scripture'; *Oratio II*, PG 65, col. 704A.

⁴⁶ *Codex Etschmiadzin*, fol. 229r. A similar effect is found on a sixth- or seventh-century relief sculpture of the Virgin and Child enthroned from Luxor: see *L'art copte en Egypte*. Exhibition Catalogue, Institut du monde arabe (Paris, 2000), 186, no. 201.

case, as often in early Byzantine art, it is difficult to distinguish intended symbolism from artistic convention, for the shell-headed niche appeared in many other contexts besides this one. However, it is undeniable that the pearl and shell metaphor was to continue in Byzantine literature well into the medieval period.⁴⁷ It also appears in certain later works of art, such as the twelfth-century mosaics of Monreale, where shells are depicted immediately beneath Gabriel and the Virgin in the Annunciation scene flanking the arch of the main apse (Plate 3.14).⁴⁸

Another better-known suite of images that described the Virgin's role in the Incarnation, both in pre-iconoclastic and post-iconoclastic art, was the evocation of fruitfulness and fertility through the depiction of water and water-birds. Byzantine church writers frequently referred to the Virgin as a spring or a fountain. The fifth-century homily on the Annunciation attributed to Proklos, that has been cited above, praises the Virgin of the Annunciation as a fount and a river.⁴⁹ Among medieval Byzantine writers, the fountain became a standard image in their repertory of praises of the Virgin. The emperor Leo VI, for example, calls her the rock from which gushed the fountain of life,⁵⁰ while the hermit monk St Neophytos invoked the Virgin as a spring irrigating paradise, as a divinely abundant river, and as a fount of flowing water.⁵¹

Among the corresponding images in art, we can note the sixth-century mosaic of Kiti, on Cyprus. Here the Virgin and Child in the apse are framed by a border consisting of repeated vases representing fountains flanked by pairs of ducks, parrots and deer (Plate 3.15).⁵² From the domestic sphere, a similar composition adorns a gold bracelet of the late sixth or early seventh century in the British Museum (Plate 3.16).⁵³ On this piece, the bezel displays the praying Virgin, while the hoop presents a kantharos flanked by swans and other birds. The image of the stream and its water-birds as an evocation of the Virgin was reprised in medieval Byzantine art, most notably in the well-known late twelfth-

⁴⁷ See M. Evangelatou, 'The purple thread of the flesh: the theological connotations of a narrative iconographic element in Byzantine images of the Annunciation', in A. Eastmond and L. James, eds, *Icon and Word: the Power of Images in Byzantium. Studies Presented to Robin Cormack* (Aldershot, 2003), 261–79, esp. 269, n. 64. See also, in addition to the examples given by Evangelatou, the twelfth-century poems recording the gifts of revetments to icons of the Virgin, edited by S. Lambros, 'Ho Markianos kodix 524', *Neos Hellenomnemon* 8 (1911), 48–9, no. 88 and 177, no. 334; the imagery of the latter poem has now been discussed by B. V. Pentcheva, 'Epigrams on icons'. in Liz James, ed., *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture* (Cambridge, 2007), 120–38, esp. 126–7.

⁴⁸ H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, 1981), figures 39–40. The yarn-bowl in the lap of the Virgin in the late twelfth-century icon of the Annunciation at Mount Sinai (our Plate 3.17) has been discussed from this perspective by Evangelatou, 'The purple thread of the flesh', 266–9, figure 16.1.

⁴⁹ *In Sanctissimae Deiparae Annuntiationem* 4; PG 85, col. 436A.

⁵⁰ *In Annuntiationem*, PG 107, col. 25B.

⁵¹ Ed. M. Torniole, 'Omèlie e catechesi mariane inedite di Neofito il Recluso (1134–1220c.)', *Marianum* 36 (1974), 184–315, esp. 242–4.

⁵² D. Michaelides, *Cypriot Mosaics* (Nicosia, 1992), 119–21, figures 70a–b.

⁵³ D. Buckton, ed., *Byzantium, Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture*. Exhibition catalogue, British Museum (London, 1994), 95–6, no. 99.

century icon of the Annunciation at Mount Sinai, where a river bank teeming with waterfowl runs along the bottom of the scene (Plate 3.17).⁵⁴

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I shall briefly contrast the depictions of the Virgin as mother in pre-iconoclastic and in post-iconoclastic art. While we have seen that the metaphorical images that evoked the Incarnation, such as vases, birds and shells, continued from the early Byzantine period into the Middle Ages, in figural art there were fundamental changes. It is now generally accepted that Byzantine artists after iconoclasm depicted the motherhood of the Virgin through a new repertoire of emotive images.⁵⁵ These new images included variations on the type of icon that shows the Virgin holding her baby in her arms in a tender embrace, so that their cheeks are touching. Plate 3.18 illustrates the famous twelfth-century Virgin of Vladimir, but similar images had appeared in Byzantine art as early as the tenth century.⁵⁶

Byzantine artists also introduced the embrace of mother and son into the narrative cycle of Christ's life – most notably in the scenes of his Deposition from the cross and of the Lamentation over his body. Plate 3.19 presents a detail from the well-known fresco of the Lamentation at Nerezi.⁵⁷ This painting also is twelfth century, but once again there is evidence that the subject of the last embrace of mother and son had been introduced into Byzantine art by the tenth century.⁵⁸ It is significant that at the same time that the new scenes of Christ's Passion were introduced, representations of the Visitation and of the Journey to Bethlehem became much less frequent in Byzantine art. The new scenes expressing the Virgin's emotions had a theological purpose in the aftermath of iconoclasm, namely, to demonstrate the reality of the Incarnation.⁵⁹ The humanity of Christ, of course, was one of the principal arguments in support of having Christian images. But, in addition to such doctrinal considerations, the affective images of post-iconoclastic Byzantine art invited their viewers' empathy. The veneration of these icons was a participatory process, one that involved the individual worshipper with the maternal feelings of Mary, both her joys and her grief. Pre-iconoclastic artists, on the other hand, were much

⁵⁴ Maguire, *Art and Eloquence*, 50–2, figure 42.

⁵⁵ H. Maguire, 'The depiction of sorrow in Middle Byzantine art', *DOP* 31 (1977), 123–74, esp. 160–66; Maguire, *Art and Eloquence*, 101–8; I. Kalavrezou, 'Images of the mother: when the Virgin Mary became the *Meter Theou*', *DOP* 44 (1990), 165–72; H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence: a History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago, 1994), 281–96; M. Vassilaki and N. Tsironis, 'Representations of the Virgin and their association with the Passion of Christ', in Vassilaki, *Mother of God*, 453–63.

⁵⁶ Maguire, *Art and Eloquence*, 60–1, 102, figures 50, 97.

⁵⁷ I. Sinkević, *The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi: Architecture, Programme, Patronage* (Wiesbaden, 2000), 48–53, figures XLVI, XLVIII.

⁵⁸ Maguire, 'The depiction of sorrow in Middle Byzantine art', 163.

⁵⁹ See the references given in n. 55, above.

less interested in the emotive aspects of the relationship of mother and son. In the sixth and seventh centuries, artists sought to prove the Incarnation not so much through the Virgin's inner mental states, but more through physical signs, such as the appearance of her pregnant body, her evident tiredness, and the actual clothing that she wore when conceiving and giving birth to Christ. Thus, in portraying the Virgin's motherhood, pre-iconoclastic art was more concerned with presenting the *external* evidence of Christ's humanity. Post-iconoclastic art, on the other hand, showed the *internal* evidence, the human feelings that enabled the viewer to experience the Incarnation not only intellectually, but also emotionally through an engagement with the inner life of the Virgin. In this sense, one could conclude that the early Byzantine images of the Virgin's maternity were more about Christ than his mother, while the later ones were also concerned with Mary herself.

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A Mother's Passion: Mary at the Crucifixion and Resurrection in the Earliest *Life of the Virgin* and its Influence on George of Nikomedeia's Passion Homilies

Stephen J. Shoemaker

In recent years, the Virgin's lament at the cross has been the subject of a number of excellent studies, including several by Niki Tsironis as well as earlier studies by Henry Maguire and Margaret Alexiou.¹ These scholars (and others) have drawn our attention to the importance of this topic for understanding the development of Marian piety as expressed in the art, literature and liturgies of Byzantium, focusing especially on the post-iconoclastic period as a time of particular significance.² The consensus of these investigations seems to be that the traditions of Mary's central role in the events of the Passion and Resurrection and her elaborate lamentations belong primarily

¹ N. Tsironis, 'The lament of the Virgin Mary from Romanos the Melode to George of Nikomedeia' (unpubl. PhD Thesis, University of London, 1998); *eadem*, 'George of Nicomedia: convention and originality in the homily on Good Friday', in E.A. Livingstone, ed., *Papers Presented at the Twelfth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Studia Patristica* 33 (Leuven, 1997), 573–7; *eadem*, 'Historicity and poetry in ninth-century homiletics: the homilies of Patriarch Photius and George of Nikomedeia', in M.B. Cunningham and P. Allen, eds, *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics, A New History of the Sermon 1* (Leiden, 1998), 295–316; M. Vassilaki and N. Tsironis, 'Representations of the Virgin and their association with the Passion of Christ', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens and Milan, 2000), 453–63; N. Tsironis, 'From poetry to liturgy: the cult of the Virgin in the Middle Byzantine period', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), 91–102; H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton NJ, 1981), 91–108; M. Alexiou, 'The lament of the Virgin in Byzantine literature and Modern Greek folk song', *BMGS* 1 (1975), 111–40. See also I. Kalavrezou, 'Images of the Mother: When the Virgin Mary became the Meter Theou', *DOP* 44 (1990), 165–72, esp. 169–70; B. Bouvier, *Le mirologue de la Vierge: Chansons et poèmes grecs sur la Passion du Christ*, Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana 16 (Rome, 1976).

² See also R. Cormack, 'Painting after iconoclasm', in A. Bryer and J. Herrin, eds, *Iconoclasm: Papers Given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies at the University of Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1977), 147–63, esp. 151–3.

to the Middle Byzantine period, first appearing in George of Nikomedeia's Passion homilies.³ A sixth-century hymn by Romanos the Melode on 'Mary at the cross' presents the only notable exception to this rule,⁴ and George of Nikomedeia is widely credited with being the first to focus on Mary's role in the Passion and Resurrection by placing her at the centre of each event and narrating the story from her point of view. The tradition of Marian lament is also believed to come into full bloom with George's homily on Good Friday, as he develops the genre from its 'embryonic state' in the iconoclast period and earlier into the more mature literary form characteristic of the Middle Byzantine period and beyond.⁵ George's homilies have thus been hailed as 'a landmark' in the history of Marian lament, whose contents not only reveal much about changing perceptions of Mary in the wake of iconoclasm but also exercised considerable influence over subsequent Marian art and literature, and over the Orthodox liturgy for Good Friday.⁶

While George's homilies were clearly influential in all of these areas, it now appears that George himself no longer deserves primary credit for the traditions that he has passed on to later centuries. An earlier and unfortunately overlooked Marian text can now be identified as George's primary source, a *Life of the Virgin* attributed to Maximos the Confessor that survives only in a Georgian translation. Published by Michel van Esbroeck in 1986, this important and highly influential narrative is commonly recognised as the earliest extant *Life of the Virgin Mary*.⁷ Although there appear to be some lingering doubts about the *Life's* attribution to Maximos, many scholars of patristics, as well as the *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, have accepted its authenticity (at least provisionally).⁸ To my knowledge, the only published challenge to Maximos's authorship has come from Ermanno Toniolo, in an

³ Tsironis, 'Lament of the Virgin Mary', 241–91; Tsironis, 'George of Nikomedeia: convention and originality'; Tsironis, 'From poetry to liturgy', 97–8; Vassilaki and Tsironis, 'Representations of the Virgin', 457–61; Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium*, 97–9; Kalavrezou, 'Images of the Mother', 169–70; Alexiou, 'Lament of the Virgin', 121.

⁴ J. Grosdidier de Matons, ed., *Romanos le Mélode: Hymnes*, SC 99, 110, 114, 128, 283 (5 vols, Paris, 1964–81), vol. 4, 143–87.

⁵ Tsironis, 'Lament of the Virgin Mary', 215–20, 243. See also Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium*, 97.

⁶ Vassilaki and Tsironis, 'Representations of the Virgin', 457; see also Tsironis, 'Lament of the Virgin Mary', 279, 292.

⁷ M. van Esbroeck, ed., *Maxime le Confesseur: Vie de la Vierge*, CSCO 478–9, *Scriptores Iberici* 21–2 (2 vols, Leuven, 1986).

⁸ For example, J.-C. Larchet, *La divinisation de l'homme selon saint Maxime le Confesseur*, *Cogitatio fidei* 194 (Paris, 1996); J.-C. Larchet, *Maxime le Confesseur, médiateur entre l'Orient et l'Occident*, *Cogitatio fidei* 208 (Paris, 1998); CPG, vol. 3, 440, no. 7712. See also M. van Esbroeck, 'Some earlier features in the Life of the Virgin', *Marianu*, 63 (2001), 297–308, esp. 297–8, n. 2. The possibility of Maximos's authorship would also comport with Claudia Rapp's observation that the seventh century saw a number of influential church leaders turn to composition of hagiography: C. Rapp, 'Byzantine hagiographers as antiquarians, seventh to tenth centuries', *BF* 21 (1995), 31–44, esp. 35.

article in which the arguments unfortunately are rather unconvincing.⁹ Yet while the question of the *Life's* authorship still awaits decisive resolution, its general antiquity is widely acknowledged. The *Life of the Virgin* attributed to Maximos is unanimously regarded as the earliest complete biography of Mary, composed well before Epiphanius the Monk wrote his *Life of the Virgin* at about the turn of the ninth century.¹⁰ In fact, as I have demonstrated in both previous and forthcoming publications, analysis of the *Life's* sources and its influence on later Marian literature locates its production in Constantinople sometime during the seventh century.¹¹ Thus its antiquity in relation to George's homilies is well established and seems to be beyond any question.

Careful comparison of this earliest *Life of the Virgin* with George's Passion homilies reveals that George has drawn the bulk of his material from this earlier *vita*, including in particular the very features for which his homilies have become so famous: Mary's central role in the Passion and Resurrection and her ornate lamentations. The basic elements of George's homilies are borrowed from the *Life's* account of Mary's involvement in her son's Passion and Resurrection. He reproduces both the *vita's* narrative sequence and the rhetorical elements of its various laments, adding his own embellishments occasionally, particularly in framing the story at the beginning and end of his homilies. Consequently, it is this earliest biography of Mary, the Georgian *Life of the Virgin* attributed to Maximos, which deserves all the accolades. It is in fact a major 'landmark' in the history of Marian lament and is, more generally, a pivotal text in the history of Marian piety.

Maximos's *Life of the Virgin* is particularly remarkable for its presentation of Mary at the centre of all the activities of her son's life and ministry and the early Church. The *Life* persistently expands on the narratives of the canonical gospels to write Mary into the story at key points, often by augmenting several of her more minor appearances, thus portraying Mary both as a central figure in her son's ministry and as the leader of the nascent Church. This emphasis is particularly evident in the *Life's* account of the Passion and Resurrection, where Mary constantly stands at the centre: as its author explains, 'from the beginning of the capture until the end of the Passion she remained near him. She saw everything and heard his words.'¹² For this reason, the *Life* explains,

⁹ E.M. Toniolo, 'L'Akathistos nella Vita di Maria di Massimo il Confessore', in I.M. Calabuig, ed., *Virgo Liber Dei: Miscellanea di studi in onore di P. Giuseppe M. Besutti*, O.S.M. (Rome, 1991), 209–28.

¹⁰ Epiphanius the Monk, *Life of the Virgin*, PG 120, cols 185–216. On Epiphanius the Monk, see A. Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature, 650–850* (Athens, 1999), 307, 396–7.

¹¹ S.J. Shoemaker, 'The Virgin Mary in the ministry of Jesus and the early Church according to the earliest *Life of the Virgin*', *HTR* 98, no. 4 (2005), 441–67; *ibid.*, 'The Georgian *Life of the Virgin* attributed to Maximus the Confessor: its authenticity (?) and importance', in A. Muraviev and B. Lourié, eds, *Mémorial R.P. Michel van Esbroeck*, S.J., *Scrinium* 2 (St Petersburg, 2006), 66–87. See also S.J. Shoemaker, 'The earliest *Life of the Virgin* and Constantinople's Marian relics', *DOP* 62 (2008), 53–74.

¹² Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 76, in van Esbroeck, ed., *Maxime le Confesseur: Vie de la Vierge*, 97 (Georgian) and 65 (French).

the gospel writers were dependent on Mary's unique witness for their knowledge of these important events. She follows her son from the courtyard of the high priest to Golgotha and beyond, seeing to his burial herself and maintaining a constant vigil at the tomb. Mary then is an eyewitness to the Resurrection itself and is the first to preach this good news to the apostles. Along the way, the *Life of the Virgin's* author introduces four laments, two of which are voiced by Mary herself: the first after the appearance before Annas and Caiaphas, two at the foot of the cross, and finally one at Christ's burial. These contain all the stock themes of classical lament, including the contrast between past and present, old and new, the innocent victim beset by wild beasts and wicked monsters, the ingratitude and injustice of the tormenters, the abandonment and isolation of the one lamenting, the sympathy of nature and a considerable amount of anti-Jewish polemic.¹³

George of Nikomedeia takes this section of the Maximos *Life of the Virgin* as his literary model, and its influence on his Passion homilies is profound. In his presentation of the events of Holy Friday and Saturday, George adopts the *Life's* narrative structure almost wholesale, and the laments in his homily on Good Friday borrow extensively from their models in the *Life of the Virgin*. To be sure, George contributes a considerable amount of original material to his Passion homilies, especially in the lamentations themselves and the encomiastic rhetoric that frames the larger narrative. Nevertheless, these ninth-century homilies are unmistakably derived from the Passion sequence of this seventh-century Marian biography, which has overwhelmingly determined their content. George is not alone in this respect, however. This long forgotten *vita Virginis* was the primary source for at least two other important works of the Middle Byzantine period, the tenth-century *Lives of the Virgin* by John the Geometer and Symeon the Metaphrast, both of which are founded on Maximos's *Life of the Virgin*.¹⁴ Clearly, in the Middle Byzantine period, the now lost Greek original of this late ancient *Life of the Virgin* still continued to circulate in the imperial capital and was highly influential on the production of Marian narratives there.

George begins his first Passion homily with some extended theological reflections of his own devising (including a brief opening lament), eventually entering the story with the Virgin standing at the foot of the cross, as described in John 19:25. Nevertheless, George immediately observes that on this point John's gospel differs significantly from the Synoptic Gospels, which not only fail to mention the Virgin's presence at the cross but also note that the women at the Crucifixion observed from a distance, not next to the cross. George offers an explanation that appears to derive from the Georgian *Life of the Virgin*: the differences in the gospel accounts result from the fact that

¹³ See Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium*, 91–101; Alexiou, 'Lament of the Virgin', esp. 111–29; Vassilaki and Tsironis, 'Representations of the Virgin', 457–60.

¹⁴ See van Esbroeck, ed., *Maxime le Confesseur: Vie de la Vierge*, vol. 2, xix–xxviii; Shoemaker, 'Virgin Mary in the ministry of Jesus', 460–5; Shoemaker, 'Georgian Life of the Virgin', 72–5, 85–6.

the disciples 'forsook him and fled' (Mk 15:50), while only John, the 'beloved disciple', remained behind to report accurately the presence of the Virgin, who was entrusted to him by Christ from the cross.¹⁵ Here George echoes the *Life of the Virgin*, which similarly blames the cowardice of Christ's male followers for such discrepancies and further explains that the sheer number of women following Jesus (which was quite considerable according to its author) greatly exacerbated the problem.¹⁶

From this starting point George's homily backs up a bit to set the scene with the Last Supper. The event is mentioned only very briefly, yet not without noting that the Virgin was placed in charge of her son's female disciples during the sacred meal, another important point of contact with the Georgian *Life of the Virgin*.¹⁷ As George continues to narrate Christ's arrest and trial, the resemblance between the two texts quickly becomes quite unmistakable, and it is clear that George has used the *Life* as his source. Following the *Life of the Virgin*, George notes that when all of his disciples fled, the Virgin alone remained with her son and stood outside the courtyard of Annas and Caiaphas during his trial, desperately scrutinising passersby in hopes of learning what was transpiring within.¹⁸ In both texts an extensive lament voiced in the third person follows this scene, which is the first and longest of several laments in both texts. Although the lament in George's homily is somewhat more extensive, he borrows a considerable amount of his rhetoric from the earlier *Life*: while George occasionally rearranges some elements and frequently introduces new material, he leaves out very little from his source.

George omits the first few lines of the *vita's* lament, replacing these with his own reflections on the unjust condemnation of this 'innocent lamb' and his desertion and denial by even his closest followers. Yet he quickly returns to his source and replicates both its rhetoric and sequence as he wonders how the Virgin could bear to see her son arrested as a common criminal, brutally beaten, and mocked by the soldiers, then reflecting on the absurdity of crowning the creator with a crown of thorns and dressing him in a purple robe.¹⁹ In other instances, however, George is somewhat freer in his arrangement of the images and themes from laments of his source text (although he follows its chronology very faithfully in relating the events of the Passion). For instance, in the remainder of this first lament, George roughly adheres to the sequence of the *Life's* first lament, occasionally interspersing his own reflections. But he follows the overall structure of the *Life* in addressing first Mary's troubled

¹⁵ George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8: On Mary Standing at the Cross and the Burial of Christ*, PG 100, col. 1461B–C. See also Tsironis, 'Historicity and poetry', 304, n. 39.

¹⁶ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 91 in van Esbroeck, ed., *Maxime le Confesseur: Vie de la Vierge*, 116 (Georgian) and 78–9 (French).

¹⁷ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 74, *ibid.*, 95 (Georgian) and 64 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1464A.

¹⁸ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 76, *ibid.*, 97 (Georgian) and 65 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1464B.

¹⁹ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 77, *ibid.*, 98–9 (Georgian) and 66–7 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1465D.

heart, and then the parallels between the nails that penetrated her son's hands and the sword that (according to Symeon's prophecy) pierced her heart, as well as the parallel between the blood that flowed from his wound and the tears streaming from her eyes.²⁰

From this point the *Life of the Virgin* continues to explain that Mary's suffering before the cross surpassed even that of her son, since he not only possessed greater power but suffered of his own choice. George, however, leaves this remark out, perhaps finding such elevation of Mary above Christ theologically questionable.²¹ In its place, George develops another idea expressed here and elsewhere in the *Life*: the amazement that Mary, as a mere human being, could possibly endure such a horrible sight as the Crucifixion without expiring on the spot.²² George then skips over the *Life's* references to Psalm 21 (which are linked with Mt 27:39–40), elaborating instead on the *Life's* brief allusion to the various mockeries that Christ endured, but he quickly returns to his model in replicating its citation of Psalm 68 (69):21–2.²³ Other elements from the *Life's* first lament appear elsewhere in George's homily, including the paradoxes that one equal to the Father, the creator of the world and all that is in it, was affixed to a cross; that although he was stripped nude, he was clothed with light as his garment; that he who sits on the most exalted throne was nailed to the wood of the cross;²⁴ that he who divided the dry land from the waters found himself confined by the walls of a prison;²⁵ and the response of nature, the heavens, the earth, and all its creatures to the Crucifixion of their creator.²⁶ All of these themes from the *Life of the Virgin's* first lament George gathers together at the beginning of his composition.

At the conclusion of this first lament, both the *Life of the Virgin* and George's homily briefly return to narrating the events of the Passion, describing how Mary was initially prevented from approaching the cross by the great mob

²⁰ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 78, *ibid.*, 99–100 (Georgian) and 67 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1468B–D. Note that van Esbroeck's translation of ὀδυρομένη as 'secoué de vagues' is too literal – 'disturbed' seems a more apt translation.

²¹ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 78, *ibid.*, 100 (Georgian) and 67 (French). John the Geometrician, however, apparently preserved and strengthened this idea: J. Galot, 'La plus ancienne affirmation de la corédemption mariale: Le témoignage de Jean le Géomètre', *Recherches de science religieuse* 45 (1957), 187–208, 198, n. 19.

²² Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 78 and 84, *ibid.*, 100, 108 (Georgian) and 67–8, 73 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, cols 1468D, 1480B.

²³ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 79, *ibid.*, 100–1 (Georgian) and 68 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1469A–B.

²⁴ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 78, *ibid.*, 99–100 (Georgian) and 67 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, cols 1459D–1460A.

²⁵ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 77, *ibid.*, 99 (Georgian) and 67 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1460C. George alters the rhetoric slightly by comparing the constraint of the waters with being fixed to the cross rather than confined in a prison.

²⁶ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 79, *ibid.*, 101 (Georgian) and 68 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1460C–D.

that had gathered.²⁷ Once the crowd returned home and the soldiers were left to guard the scene, Mary finally was able to reach the foot of the cross, where she delivered a lament in the first person. This is the second lament in both accounts, and once again, George's homily shows considerable dependence on the *Life of the Virgin*. Although there is not always strict verbal agreement between the two texts as the second lament begins, their themes overlap, and they use similar rhetoric to address the same issues. In each text, Mary begins by questioning her son directly, asking, 'Why is this, Lord?'²⁸ She wonders aloud how one so righteous could fall into the hands of the wicked, who repay his divine love and condescension only with Crucifixion. Mary here addresses the Jews specifically, delivering in both texts an anti-Jewish diatribe that reflects the anti-Judaism frequently associated with Marian piety during the early Middle Ages.²⁹

In Maximos's *Life of the Virgin*, Mary catalogs the many outrages that the 'Jews' committed against her son, noting with irony how each of their actions mirrors in some way God's benevolent actions toward them in the past. Christ's garments of mockery are compared with God's care for the Jews, whom he covered with a cloud of light; the crown of thorns is contrasted with the crown of glory and honour that the Lord has given humankind (Ps 8:5); the rod with which Christ is stricken recalls the rod that Moses used to divide the Red Sea; and their spitting upon him evokes Christ's healing of the blind with his spittle.³⁰ George leaves this section out and perhaps with good reason: it attributes actions to the Jews that the gospels explicitly ascribe to the Roman soldiers. This is a little odd, inasmuch as the *Life of the Virgin* at an earlier point clearly attributes these actions to the soldiers,³¹ and their elision here should perhaps be understood in light of a proximate reference to the Jewish mob's demand to crucify Jesus instead of Barabbas (which immediately precedes the soldiers' mockery in the gospels). Nonetheless, George, who elsewhere does not shy away from such vicious anti-Jewish polemic, may have been uncomfortable with the rather obvious incongruities between this passage and the scriptural accounts.

Following this reinterpretation of the soldiers' mockery, the two laments once again correspond very closely, and George adopts polemical material

²⁷ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 80, *ibid.*, 102 (Georgian) and 69 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1469B–C.

²⁸ Բա՛ն ճԵՆ յԵՅ ԹԵՂԵՂԵՐ / Τί τοῦτο, Δέσποτα: Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 81, *ibid.*, 103 (Georgian) and 69 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1469C.

²⁹ See S.J. Shoemaker, "'Let us go and burn her body': the image of the Jews in the early Dormition traditions", *Church History* 68.4 (1999), 775–823; see also M.B. Cunningham, 'Polemic and exegesis: anti-Judaic invective in Byzantine homiletics', *Sobornost* 21 (1999), 46–68.

³⁰ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 81, van Esbroeck, ed., *Maxime le Confesseur: Vie de la Vierge*, 103–4 (Georgian) and 70 (French).

³¹ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 77, *ibid.*, 98–9 (Georgian) and 66 (French).

from the *Life of the Virgin* that is more properly directed toward against Jews, changing its order only slightly. In both laments Mary expresses wonder that the Jews, despite the various miracles that her son performed among them, are determined to harm him, and she continues to bemoan the bitter ironies of their actions. They repay one who had raised many from the dead by putting him to death; in return for the many whose eyes were opened, they hasten to close his own eyes; in exchange for the many lepers and others whose bodies he restored, they seek to injure his body.³² Then Mary describes the natural world's response to the execution of its creator, as the heavens, the earth and the luminaries of the sky all depart from their normal course, a topic already addressed in the first lament. George here recasts this theme in having Mary call upon the sun, the heavens, the earth and the underworld to join in her grief.³³ Finally, the *Life's* second lament comes to a close as Mary expresses her wish to suffer in her son's place, a topic that George develops at far greater length in his homily.³⁴ She notes that although Christ preserved intact her virginity and purity in his birth, his Passion has caused a sword to pierce her heart, an idea that George expresses by contrasting Mary's intact virginity with the nails that pierced her son's limbs.³⁵ Mary then concludes her lament at the cross in the *Life* with a final request to witness her son's Resurrection and glory as he had promised, a point absent from George's homily, where Mary concludes instead with a request for her son to speak a sweet and life-giving word of farewell.³⁶

After this second lament, both texts return to narrating the events of the Passion, reflecting on various elements of the canonical traditions. From the cross Christ observes the great sorrow that has overtaken his mother, and he hopes to comfort her by entrusting her to his beloved disciple, who is also standing nearby as described in the Fourth Gospel (Jn 19:26–7). Yet in reflecting on this event, George parts company with the *Life of the Virgin*.³⁷ The *Life's* author takes this opportunity to address a somewhat surprising topic: Christ's apparent disrespect of his mother on occasion in the canonical gospels. The *Life* warns its readers that one should not misconstrue Christ's entrusting his mother to his disciple as somehow abandoning his responsibilities toward her. Although the beloved disciple became her source of 'visible' support, Christ 'invisibly' maintained both his mother and the disciple in his care,

³² Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 81, *ibid.*, 104 (Georgian) and 70 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1472A–B.

³³ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 81, *ibid.*; George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1472C.

³⁴ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 81, *ibid.*, 104–5 (Georgian) and 70–1 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, cols 1472B–1473B.

³⁵ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 81, *ibid.*, 104–5 (Georgian) and 71 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1472B.

³⁶ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 81, *ibid.*, 105 (Georgian) and 71 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1473C–D.

³⁷ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 82, *ibid.*, 105–6 (Georgian) and 71–2 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, cols 1473D–1477B.

together with all who believe in him. To the contrary, this act reflects the great honour in which he held his mother and is a sign to all that children must care for and respect their parents until the end, 'even if on some other occasions he providentially did not show complete submission'.³⁸ The *Life* addresses both Christ's words to his mother at Cana: 'Woman, what have you to do with me' (Jn 2:4), and his response in the Synoptics when his mother and brothers come looking for him: 'Who are my mother and my brothers? ... Here are my mother and brothers' (Mt 12:48–9). These things he spoke 'according to providence', the *Life* explains, and his actions from the cross underline his ceaseless love and respect for his mother.³⁹

George takes a somewhat different tack here, perhaps feeling a bit uncomfortable at acknowledging so directly this tension in a homily for catechumens, although he does follow the *Life* in underscoring this act as a sign of Christ's profound and incredible obedience to his mother.⁴⁰ Yet he does not dwell on this issue, choosing instead to put words in Jesus' mouth that echo the *Life's* assurance that Christ remained a source of spiritual care and support to his mother even after entrusting her to his disciple. Christ makes this promise to ease his mother's sadness, offering further assurances that his suffering and death will bring salvation to all humanity.⁴¹ He further explains that his mother will hold a position of great respect and authority among his disciples in his absence: after his death, she is to stand in his place among the disciples, serving as a substitute for his physical presence. Through her he will remain in their midst, and she will be their mediator, offering ready reconciliation with her son.⁴² As George's Jesus turns to address the beloved disciple, he elaborates on this same point. 'Behold,' he says, 'she whom I commend to you in my place.' Not only are the disciples to venerate her, but he establishes her in his absence as the 'leader' (καθηγουμένη) of John and the other disciples.⁴³

Although these traditions of Mary's authority over the apostles after the Crucifixion are absent from the equivalent scene in the *Life of the Virgin*, they are nonetheless important evidence of the *Life's* influence on George's homilies. In the period between the Ascension and the Assumption, the *Life of the Virgin* describes Mary's central role in the formation of the early Church. The *Life* identifies Mary as the 'leader and teacher of the holy apostles' who oversees all the activities of the early Church through direct supervision of the apostles, teaching them not only how to pray but what they should preach.⁴⁴ It would appear that here George has incorporated material from

³⁸ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 82, *ibid.*, 105–6 (Georgian) and 71 (French).

³⁹ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 82, *ibid.*, 106 (Georgian) and 71–2 (French).

⁴⁰ George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1476A.

⁴¹ George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1476B–C. On the circumstances in which George's homilies were delivered, see Tsironis, 'Historicity and poetry', 300.

⁴² George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1476D.

⁴³ George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1477A–B.

⁴⁴ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 99, in van Esbroeck, ed., *Maxime le*

outside of the Maximos *Life's* Passion narrative, which he knows from having read the complete text. Since his homilies conclude with the Resurrection, he introduces this tradition earlier at the Crucifixion, having Jesus clearly establish Mary's leadership role through his words to the beloved disciple.

Following this insertion, the two narratives once again converge, adhering to the Fourth Gospel's account as they consider Christ's words 'I thirst' and the sponge soaked with vinegar and gall that he is offered in response.⁴⁵ Both texts ascribe this outrage to the Jews, which not only is in tension with canonical gospels, where Roman soldiers make the offer, but it also seems to contradict the previous statement that the crowd had dispersed, leaving only the soldiers behind. George, however, improves on his source by very deliberately reintroducing the Jews onto the scene, whom he calls 'bloodthirsty beasts', explaining that they came together again and gathered around the cross. Yet this occurred not only, as John explains, so that prophecy would be fulfilled: the prophecy was not the cause of the Jews' outrageous arrogance, but the arrogance of their disobedience was the means by which prophecy was fulfilled.⁴⁶ Both sources note the intense irony that these Jews would offer such a foul drink to one who is himself 'the sweetness of life'. The *Life*, in a section that George omits, extends the irony even further by recalling several instances when the Lord miraculously provided the Jews pleasant drink, by making the bitter waters at Marah sweet (Ex 15:25), bringing forth honey and oil from a rock in the desert (Deut 32:13), and turning the water into wine at Cana.⁴⁷ But George is quickly back with his source, echoing the *Life's* report that Mary, at hearing him express his thirst, was wounded even more deeply than before, and her heart was consumed with fire: she pled with them to no avail to give her son some water.⁴⁸ George also follows the *Life of the Virgin* in making clear distinction between the 'vinegar and gall' presented to Christ at the end of his Crucifixion and the 'wine mixed with myrrh' offered as he was

Confesseur: Vie de la Vierge, 129 (Georgian) and 87 (French). See also Shoemaker, 'Virgin Mary in the ministry of Jesus', esp. 454–6, 460.

⁴⁵ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 83, *ibid.*, 106–7 (Georgian) and 72 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1477C–D. Despite their adherence to the sequence of the Johannine Passion narrative here, both the *Life of the Virgin* and George cite Mt 27:34 according to the Byzantine text, which brings the citation into conformity with Ps 68 (69):22. Van Esbroeck incorrectly identifies the citation with Jn 19.28–9.

⁴⁶ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 83, *ibid.*: ხოლო არა თუ წინასწარმეტყუელებისა თჳს აღესრულა, არამედ რომელი აღსრულებად იყო, ამის თჳს წინასწარმეტყუელებამან მოასწავა რამეთუ არა წინასწარმეტყუელებაი კადნიერებისა მათისა მიზეზ იქმნა, არამედ კადნიერებაი ურზულოებისა მათისა წინასწარმეტყუელებისა მიზეზ იყო. George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8* (PG 100, col. 1477C–D): Ὁς γὰρ διὰ τῶν προφητευσθέντων ἀνάγκην, τὰ παρ' αὐτῶν ἐδράτο τοιμῶμενα· διὰ τὴν αὐτῶν ἀπαραίτητον ἀγνωμοσύνην, ἢ ἀψευδῆς καὶ προκαταβέβληται, καὶ πεπλήρωται προφητεία.

⁴⁷ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 83, *ibid.*, 107 (Georgian) and 72 (French).

⁴⁸ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 83, *ibid.*, 107 (Georgian) and 72–3 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, cols 1477D–1480A.

being nailed to the cross.⁴⁹ The latter was offered to Jesus, both authors explain, in order to ease his suffering by hastening his death, but this he refused. The vinegar and gall, however, he received just before expiring.

At this point a third short lament begins in both texts, voiced in the third person, which explains that no one could possibly comprehend or describe the unbearable sufferings experienced by the Virgin at her son's Crucifixion. When he cried out in a great voice, commending his spirit into his father's hands, it is a wonder that Mary did not expire on the spot. Both authors attribute her endurance to divine assistance, without which she could not possibly have held up in the face of such tragedy. It was essential that she persevere so that she could see to her son's burial and witness his Resurrection.⁵⁰ But the 'evil beasts and impious God-murderers' were not yet finished. Ignoring the Virgin's lamentations, they, being 'harder than stone', pierced his side with a spear even after his death, and with this act caused a sword to pierce her heart as well.⁵¹ Summoning what little strength remained in her, the Virgin spoke her funeral lament before seeing to her son's burial, and George expands on the *Life* by supplying Mary's words for this occasion in a first-person lament focused on the piercing of her son's side.⁵²

George next follows the *Life of the Virgin* in describing Mary's immediate concern to locate a suitable place for her son's body, which she has been left to bury. As both texts explain, she could not bear to leave this life-giving body hanging lifeless on the cross for a moment longer, and so she ardently searched the area of Golgotha for a suitable burial place. 'Her feet were going from place to place, but her eyes and her mind were inseparable from her beloved Lord and son.'⁵³ Then she discovered nearby an empty new tomb that had not been used, as it is described by the gospels. In a section omitted by George, the *Life* explains that the tomb was new so that it could hold the new Adam; it was in a garden to represent the new Eden; and it was at Golgotha because there Adam is buried.⁵⁴ In both narratives Mary seeks the owner of the tomb and discovers that that it belongs to a certain Joseph who not only had secretly been one of her son's disciples but was also an acquaintance of Pilate. She goes and requests his permission to bury her son in the tomb. First she gives Joseph a summary of what has transpired and then asks not only to

⁴⁹ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 83, *ibid.*, 107–8 (Georgian) and 73 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1480A. The reference is clearly to Mk 15:23 and not Mt 27:34 as van Esbroeck suggests.

⁵⁰ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 84, *ibid.*, 108 (Georgian) and 73 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1480B–C.

⁵¹ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 85, *ibid.*, 109 (Georgian) and 73–4 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1481A.

⁵² Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 86, *ibid.*, 110 (Georgian) and 74 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1481B–D.

⁵³ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 86, *ibid.*; cf. George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1484A–B.

⁵⁴ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 86, *ibid.*, 111 (Georgian) and 75 (French).

use his tomb, but, since he is a friend of Pilate, she also requests that he ask the governor for the body as well. She has been left alone, she explains, both frail and a foreigner, and only a single disciple remains with her (presumably Nikodemos). She concludes with a final plea for his assistance in burying 'this corpse that raises other corpses'.⁵⁵ Joseph grants what the Virgin asks, and he successfully requests the body from Pilate and removes it from the cross. The *Life* then describes Joseph as the 'anti-Judas' in an elaborate comparison left out by George: one betrayed his Lord for a small amount of silver, while the other used the status of his wealth to recover the body, one embraced the Lord falsely to hand him over for Crucifixion, while the other embraced him lovingly while detaching him from the cross, one delivered his Lord to a violent mob of Jews with swords and torches, while the other removed his nails and returned him to his mother.⁵⁶

In both accounts the Virgin watches as the body is taken down, and when Joseph hands it to her, she washes it with her abundant tears and delivers a final lament just before the burial, which is very similar in both texts. Mary first extols her son's accomplishment of the tremendous mystery, a hidden mystery kept secret for many ages. Then she contrasts the present with the past, noting the irony that the creator of all souls now lies himself without a soul, that the Word of God who created all speaking nature now lies without speech, that the eyes of him who with speech and gesture set all that moves into motion are now without movement, and that he who healed the wounded has himself received wounds and blows, which themselves will ultimately heal all humanity. In conclusion, Mary consoles herself with thoughts of the Resurrection that is to come, which will bring the restoration of humanity and restore her son to her: then she will hear his sweet voice again and look upon his face.⁵⁷

Following this lament, Mary and Joseph together with Nikodemos (who suddenly is announced) anoint Christ's body and place it in the new tomb. When they finish, Joseph and Nikodemos depart from the tomb, leaving Mary behind alone to await the Resurrection.⁵⁸ At this point George's homily concludes its narration of the Passion and entombment, and George begins to speak for himself, addressing Christ in the first person. He thanks God for his mercy and for suffering on his behalf, eventually concluding with a series of statements expressing his veneration for the various instruments of Christ's Passion, his tomb and his mother.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 87, *ibid.*, 111–12 (Georgian) and 75–6 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, cols 1484C–1485C.

⁵⁶ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 88, *ibid.*, 113–14 (Georgian) and 76–7 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1485C–D.

⁵⁷ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 89, *ibid.*, 114–15 (Georgian) and 77–8 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1488A–C.

⁵⁸ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 90, *ibid.*, 115–16 (Georgian) and 78 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, col. 1488C.

⁵⁹ George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 8*, PG 100, cols 1488D–1489D: 'I venerate (kiss) (φιλω) your sufferings ... I venerate your cross ... I venerate the nails ... I venerate your wounds ... I venerate the sponge ... I venerate the spear ... I venerate your side ... I

George continues the story, however, in his homily *On the Immaculate Virgin's Vigil at the Tomb*, where he again borrows a considerable amount of material from the *Life of the Virgin* now preserved only in Georgian. This homily, written for Holy Saturday, begins with a prologue focused on themes appropriate for the day, exalting in Christ's victory over death and his deliverance of humankind, before eventually coming to focus on the Virgin and her central role in the events of her son's Resurrection.⁶⁰ At this point George falls quickly back into step with his source, reproducing its insistence that Mary alone maintained a constant vigil at the tomb. Following the *Life*, George considers the canonical reports of various women who were present for burial, explaining how all of these ultimately lead to the conclusion that Mary alone remained behind. Both texts acknowledge that Mary of Magdala and various other women visited the tomb after his burial and sat across from it (as in Mt 27:61), but they explain that these women were eventually driven away by fear of the Jews and the soldiers who were stationed at the tomb. Thus the women departed to procure spices and planned to return first thing in the morning; only Mary of Nazareth remained at the tomb for the entire period between the burial and Resurrection.⁶¹ Consequently, she alone was witness to everything that transpired during this interval. She observed the earthquake and saw the angel that knocked out the guards and rolled the stone away from the tomb. When the myrrh-bearing women arrived early in the morning, they were too late: they found only the angel sitting atop the stone and the tomb empty. Mary of Nazareth thus becomes the first to learn of the Resurrection and to announce it to her son's disciples, proclaiming it before the myrrh-bearing women discover the empty tomb.⁶² Borrowing another theme from earlier in the *Life of the Virgin*, George inserts an additional passage here explaining that since the Virgin was the only witness to all of the events from Christ's arrest to his Resurrection, the gospel writers depended almost entirely on her testimony for their accounts of the Passion and Resurrection.⁶³

Next, both accounts offer an explanation for the gospel writers' absolute silence regarding the Virgin's constant presence at the tomb and her initial witness to the Resurrection. George follows the *Life* here precisely in explaining that the evangelists deliberately left out this information because many would see a mother's testimony as suspect, and, moreover, it might invite suspicion that the gospel writers had fabricated the tradition in an effort to further glorify

venerate your shroud ... I venerate your funeral garments ... I venerate the tomb ... I venerate the stone ... I venerate the hands of your mother ...'

⁶⁰ George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 9: On the Immaculate Virgin's Vigil at the Tomb*, PG 100, cols 1489D–92D.

⁶¹ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 91, in van Esbroeck, ed., *Maxime le Confesseur: Vie de la Vierge*, 116–18 (Georgian) and 78–80 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 9*, PG 100, cols 1493A–96A.

⁶² Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 92, *ibid.*, 118–19 (Georgian) and 80 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 9*, PG 100, cols 1496B–97A.

⁶³ George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 9*, PG 100, col. 1496B–C; Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 76, *ibid.*, 97 (Georgian) and 65 (French).

the Virgin. Therefore it made more sense for the gospel writers to focus on the more secure witness of the myrrh-bearing women, which would provoke fewer doubts in the minds of potential converts.⁶⁴ Only later, thanks to their sound judgment and the success of their message, could the *Life of the Virgin's* author (and following him, George of Nikomedeia) finally tell the full story.

At this point George's dependence on the *Life of the Virgin* comes to an end; he has exhausted the information that his source has to offer for his topic. The *Life* continues to narrate Mary's activities up to the Ascension and her important leadership over the apostles in the early Church, whereas George brings his homily to a conclusion by returning to reflections on the feast for which his homily was composed, emphasising further the Virgin's role as the first to witness her son's Resurrection and giving her a final speech for the occasion. It was only fitting, he notes, that she who shared in his sufferings should also be the first to share in the joy of his Resurrection, thereby establishing a closing link between his two homilies.⁶⁵ The homily then concludes with a final plea that Christ make George and his congregation share in the joy of that moment when his mother first saw him risen from the dead, recalling the event in highly evocative and sensual terms.⁶⁶

George of Nikomedeia's Passion homilies thus betray extensive evidence of their dependence on the seventh-century *Life of the Virgin* attributed to Maximos the Confessor, a quality they share with other important Marian writings from the Middle Byzantine period. In this way, George's homilies bring additional witness to the cardinal influence of this earliest Marian biography on the development of Byzantium's Marian piety. The Maximos *Life of the Virgin* is truly a major watershed in the history of Marian literature, as is becoming increasingly clear. It gathers together the Marian traditions of the ancient Church, some of which would be otherwise unknown, and transmits them to the medieval Church, providing the template for numerous compositions of the Middle Byzantine period. Thanks to the success of George's homilies and Symeon's life, however, this early narrative's influence reached well beyond this age.⁶⁷ George's homilies, for instance, were indeed very influential on Byzantine iconography and on the Orthodox service for Holy Friday, as several scholars have noted. Yet it should now be recognised that many of the most influential ideas and rhetoric from George's homilies are not his own but rather were borrowed from the *Life of the Virgin*. Consequently, these developments in Marian literature and piety are not in fact a product of the post-iconoclastic period, as they have frequently been interpreted, but rather they belong to late antiquity, the seventh century if not

⁶⁴ Maximos the Confessor, *Life of the Virgin* 92, *ibid.*, 119–20 (Georgian) and 81 (French); George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 9*, PG 100, col. 1497C.

⁶⁵ George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 9*, PG 100, cols 1497D–1501A.

⁶⁶ George of Nikomedeia, *Homily 9*, PG 100, cols 1502D–1504C.

⁶⁷ The widespread success of Symeon's metaphor of this earlier *Life* no doubt explains why its Greek original was not preserved: Symeon's version had replaced it. As Rapp observes, Symeon's *Menologion* is preserved in at least 693 manuscripts: Rapp, 'Byzantine hagiographers', 32.

perhaps even earlier. We must work towards a new understanding of these traditions that situates them within this very different context. Likewise, it is essential that we begin pay closer attention this important and influential (and unjustly ignored) text, which has profoundly determined the shape of Byzantium's (and Orthodoxy's) Marian piety.

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Portrayals of Mary in Greek Homiletic Literature (6th–7th centuries)¹

Pauline Allen

Introduction

In the course of carrying out my assigned tasks in the International Early Mariology Project – an examination of North African texts before AD 431 – I have experienced some frustration on a number of fronts. The most significant of these are, firstly, the uncertain dating of many texts, the most notorious being the homilies of Augustine;² secondly, the seeming impossibility of reconciling substantial textual remains containing little Mariological evidence with scant archaeological and art historical data;³ and thirdly, the considerable amount of pious or semi-pious literature, much of it from Roman Catholic scholars of the 1950s and 1960s, which anachronistically presupposes almost *ab initio* a developed cult of Mary.⁴

¹ This chapter was originally delivered as a paper at the Fifteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, 6–11 August 2007, and grew out of a project funded by the Australian Research Council (2003–5).

² See F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop. The Life and Work of a Father of the Church*, trans. B. Battershaw and G.R. Lamb (London and New York, 1961), 247; P.-P. Verbraken, 'Lire aujourd'hui les Sermons de saint Augustin', *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 119 (1987), 829–39; H.R. Drobner, 'Studying Augustine: an overview of recent research', in R. Dodaro and G. Lawless, eds, *Augustine and His Critics. Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner* (London and New York, 2000), 18–34 at 33 n. 15.

³ See P. Allen, 'The International Mariological Project: a case-study of Augustine's Letters', *VC* 60 (2006), 209–30. On the whole project see L.M. Peltomaa, 'Towards the origins of the history of the cult of Mary', in F. Young, M. Edwards and P. Parvis, eds, *Papers Presented to the Fourteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Studia Patristica* 40 (2006), 75–86.

⁴ Adeptly assessed from a non-Catholic, evangelical point of view by D.F. Wright, 'Introduction', and 'Mary in the New Testament', 1–14 and 15–33 respectively, in *idem*, ed., *Chosen by God. Mary in Evangelical Perspective* (London, 1989); see also P. Allen, 'Full of grace or a credal commodity? John 2:1–11 and Augustine's view of Mary', in P. Allen, M. Franzmann, and R. Strelan, eds, 'And I sowed fruits into hearts' (*Odes Sol.* 17:13).

From these frustrations arises the topic of this chapter. It remains to be seen whether I am exchanging one set of frustrations for another as I explore the feasibility of working backwards and forwards from Greek homiletic evidence to see if, and to what extent, a development of the Marian cult can be discerned on this basis.⁵

To those who work in the general field of Mariology the problematic presented by Greek homilies from the sixth and seventh centuries will sound all too familiar,⁶ but it will be salutary to remind ourselves of and acquaint others with the complexity of the issues and the slipperiness of the data involved. To begin with, we have the difficulty of dating texts and attributing them to their proper author; many of these texts have been interpolated or recycled for later liturgical use; and a substantial amount of what has come down to us, which is but a small fraction of what must have been written or delivered originally, is unedited or survives in oriental translations or poorly edited Greek texts. Furthermore, vagaries of transmission make it an arduous task to obtain an overview of the works of specific homilists and therefore also of a continuing or developing Mariological tradition. If, for example, in dealing with the sixth- and seventh-century evidence we leave aside for the moment the homilies of the shadowy Timothy of Jerusalem,⁷ we have only four *corpora* of any size worth mentioning: those of Leontios, presbyter of Constantinople (at least fourteen homilies),⁸ Severos, patriarch of Antioch (125),⁹ Sophronios of Jerusalem (seven homilies and six *dubia*),¹⁰ and Anastasios of Sinai (nine).¹¹ Scores of homilies by talented preachers and

Festschrift for Professor Michael Lattke, Early Christian Studies 12 (Strathfield, 2007), 1–12.

⁵ For partial treatments of this evidence see the following (a select bibliography): M. van Esbroeck, 'Le culte de la Vierge de Jérusalem à Constantinople aux 6e–7e siècles', *RÉB* 46 (1988), 181–90; M.B. Cunningham, 'The Mother of God in early Byzantine homilies', *Sobornost* 10/2 (1988), 53–67; A. Cameron, 'The early cult of the Virgin', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Milan and Athens, 2000), 3–15; M. Fassler, 'The first Marian feast in Constantinople and Jerusalem: chant texts, readings, and homiletic literature', in P. Jeffery, ed., *The Study of Medieval Chant: Paths and Bridges, East and West: In Honor of Kenneth Levy* (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester, NY, 2001), 25–87; A. Cameron, Introduction to M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT, 2004), xxvii–xxxii; M.B. Cunningham, 'The meeting of the old and the new: the typology of Mary the Theotokos in Byzantine homilies and hymns', in R.N. Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary. Studies in Church History* 39 (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester NY, 2004), 52–62.

⁶ On the *status quaestionis*, see M.B. Cunningham and P. Allen, *Preacher and Audience. Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics*, A New History of the Sermon 1 (Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 1998), 1–20.

⁷ CPG 7405–19; see B. Capelle, 'Les homélies liturgiques du prétendu Timothée de Jérusalem', *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 63 (1949), 5–26.

⁸ See C. Datema and P. Allen, eds, *Leontii Presbyteri Constantinopolitani Homiliae*, CChr ser.gr 17 (Turnhout and Leuven, 1987).

⁹ CPG 7035.

¹⁰ CPG 7637–43 and 7657–63, respectively.

¹¹ CPG 7747–55.

significant figures of the period have disappeared. Losses to be lamented in particular are the many pieces which must have been composed by Ephrem of Antioch, Theodosios of Alexandria, Anastasios of Antioch, Gregory of Antioch and Eulogios of Alexandria. An additional difficulty is the fact that the Marian feasts introduced in the sixth and seventh centuries are often region-specific in their implementation, of varying dates, or of dates subsequently revised.

I propose to proceed as follows. Firstly, I would like to consider the homilies on the themes – I purposely do not say ‘feasts’ – of the Annunciation and the Hypapante (or presentation of the child Jesus in the temple), because these are the only major Marian themes in Byzantium which rest on a scriptural rather than an apocryphal basis (which is not to say that homilies on these themes do not contain material from the often more vivid apocryphal sources). One angle which I hope may be useful in all of this is to consider how the scandal, or, at best, the ambiguity in the role of Mary as portrayed in the New Testament¹² and in early Christian literature¹³ became gradually mitigated, sanitised, or even deleted in sixth- and seventh-century Greek homilies. This may help us to track developments in the cult of Mary and contribute to the work done in this volume by Leena Mari Peltomaa, who investigates the intercessory role which was increasingly assigned to the Mary, and Derek Krueger, who examines the portrayal of Mary in seventh-century miracle stories.¹⁴ In addition, but unfortunately only briefly, I would like to consider comparisons with representations of Mary in some other literary genres and in visual imagery, in order to assess to what extent the homilies in question do or do not fit a general tendency. I should make it plain that I use the term Theotokos, or ‘God-bearer’, advisedly and do not subsume it into the title Mother of God; more often than not, in fact, I will be referring simply to ‘Mary’ to avoid theologically or emotionally charged terms. Some years ago David Wright drew attention to the importance of distinguishing between Mary as God-bearer and Mary as Mother of God, but his advice has largely gone unheeded.¹⁵ I will return to this consideration later in the chapter.

¹² See in general, e.g., D. McCracken, *The Scandal of the Gospels: Jesus, Story, and Offense* (New York, 1994); B.R. Gaventa, *Mary. Glimpses of the Mother of Jesus* (Edinburgh, 1999), 128: ‘All these glimpses of Mary (sc. from the four gospels) somehow belong to the theme of the scandal of the gospel, although they do so in very different ways.’

¹³ See e.g. R.B. Eno, ‘Mary and her role in Patristic theology’, in H.G. Anderson, J.F. Stafford and J.A. Burgess, eds, *The One Mediator, the Saints, and Mary. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VIII* (Augsburg, 1992), 161–5; N. Constat, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity. Homilies 1–5, Texts and Translations*, Supplements to VC 66 (Leiden and Boston, 2003), 275–9. S. Agouridis, ‘The Virgin Mary in the texts of the Gospels’, in Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God*, 59–65, sums up inconsistencies rather than dealing with the theme of scandal.

¹⁴ For the work of the former see ‘Romanos the Melodist and the intercessory role of Mary’, in K. Belke, E. Kislinger, A. Külzer and M.A. Stassinopoulou, eds, *Byzantina Mediterranea. Festschrift für Johannes Koder zum 65. Geburtstag* (Vienna, Cologne and Weimar, 2007), 1–12; for the latter, ‘Mary at the threshold: the Mother of God as guardian in seventh-century Palestinian miracle accounts’, in this volume.

¹⁵ D.F. Wright, ‘From “God-Bearer” to “Mother of God” in the later Fathers’, in

Homilies on the Annunciation

We know that in certain parts of the East a Marian feast which included the Annunciation theme formed part of the pre-Nativity celebrations,¹⁶ and that at least in Constantinople this feast predated the Council of Ephesos.¹⁷ A letter of Emperor Justinian in 560 argued for placing the Annunciation on 25 March and fixing the Nativity and Hypapante on 25 December and 2 February, respectively.¹⁸

In terms of scandal or ambiguity in Mary's role in the Lucan narrative of the Annunciation, earlier exegetes had to deal with her seeming disbelief in the contents of Gabriel's message, a disbelief which went unpunished, and to explain conversely the harsh punishment meted out to Zachariah for his similar incredulity in the face of the news delivered previously by the same angelic messenger.¹⁹

From the time-span chosen for this chapter, we have six edited homilies on the theme of the Annunciation. The first of these chronologically is the homily which Severos of Antioch delivered between 18 November and 16 December 512, as part of the pre-Nativity celebrations still obtaining in Antioch at that date.²⁰ Only after a long disquisition on one-nature Christology do we meet the archangel Gabriel, who has realised that Mary has misunderstood his message to her. Gabriel had intended to tell her that his salutation was not simply that, but that it effected an extraordinary action, namely the conception of the Word.²¹ This instantaneous conception, perhaps deriving from anti-Origenist polemic,²² is a commonplace in the Annunciation tradition,²³ as is Gabriel's lecture to Mary, found here in Severos, telling her

Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, 22–30; an earlier version in 'Mother of God?', in Wright, ed., *Chosen by God*, 120–40. On the earlier history of the term 'Theotokos', see M. Starowieyski, 'Le titre Θεοτόκος avant le concile d'Ephèse', in E.A. Livingstone, ed., *Papers Presented to the Tenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Studia Patristica* 19 (1989), 236–42.

¹⁶ M. Jugie, 'La première fête mariale en Orient et en Occident, l'advent primitif', *EO* 22 (1923), 129–52. See also *ODB* 1, 106–7.

¹⁷ F.J. Leroy, *L'homilétique de Proclus de Constantinople. Tradition manuscrite, inédits, études connexes*, ST 247 (Vatican City, 1967), 66.

¹⁸ M. van Esbroeck, 'La lettre de l'empereur Justinien sur l'Annonciation et la Noël en 561', *AnalBoll* 86 (1968), 351–71; palinode in *idem*, 'Encore la lettre de Justinien. Sa date: 560 et non 561', *AnalBoll* 87 (1969), 442–4.

¹⁹ On this exegetical stumbling-block, see Eno, 'Mary and her role', 170–1.

²⁰ Cathedral Homily 2, PO 38/2, 270–91. On the date see M. Brière, 'Introduction générale à toutes les homélies', PO 29/1, 51. See J.-M. Saugey, 'Une découverte inespérée: l'homélie 2 de Sévère d'Antioche sur l'Annonciation de la Theotokos', in R.H. Fischer, ed., *A Tribute to Arthur Vööbus. Studies in Early Christian Literature and Environment, Primarily in the Syrian East* (Chicago, 1977), 55–62; E. Lucchesi, 'Notice touchant l'homélie XIV de Sévère d'Antioche', *VC* 33 (1979), 291–3; P. Allen, 'The Mariology of Severus of Antioch as revealed in his homilies', forthcoming.

²¹ PO 38/2, 278, ch. 11.

²² So Jugie, PO 16/3, 440, n. 4.

²³ Constas, Proclus of Constantinople, 297–8.

not to let her human thoughts get in the way of his message. But Mary still hesitates.²⁴ Gabriel clearly has the upper hand as he explains to her further, anachronistically, that the Word is one of three hypostases and has become incarnate in her without change and without confusion (the terminology of Chalcedon).²⁵ After some anti-Nestorian (anti-Chalcedonian?) statements, the homily concludes with general ethical precepts, without reference to Mary as an *exemplum*, and with no intercession to her, although she has an intercessory role in two other homilies of Severos.²⁶ As far as we can tell from the Syriac translation, Severos's preferred epithets for Mary in this homily are 'Virgin' and 'Theotokos and ever-Virgin'.

Of great interest is our next homilist, Abraham of Ephesos, who considers himself to be one of the first preachers to have delivered a festal homily on the Annunciation on the very day, he says, when Mary received the message from heaven.²⁷ According to Abraham, the Annunciation was such a momentous occasion that even the heavenly powers were confounded by the divine *συγκατάβασις* (condescension). Only Gabriel was confident.²⁸ But then he, on appearing to the Virgin and uttering the word 'Hail', was astounded, seeing in her the one who had sent him from heaven arriving before him on earth: this is why, explains Abraham, he added 'full of grace'. And in fear the angel addressed the Virgin, as if standing before the throne of the cherubim, so he did not dare to look her in the eye because of the one who had arrived in her.²⁹ Here the conception is not instantaneous but even precedes Gabriel's arrival on earth. However, subsequently Abraham seems a little uneasy about this rapid sequence of events, for he tells his congregation that immediately on hearing the word 'hail' the Virgin was made a receptacle.³⁰ The homilist stresses the immediacy of the formation of the perfect man upon the entry of the Word into Mary, such that there was not even the slightest lapse of time, there was no previously formed human being, and no divinity pre-existed in Mary's womb.³¹ The remainder of the homily is devoted to attacks on Nestorians, Eutychians, Origenists and Jews, all of whom in one way or another disputed the manner or the fact of this conception. Throughout Mary is referred to as *παρθένος* (Virgin) and only once as Theotokos.³²

²⁴ PO 38/2, 284, ch. 25.

²⁵ PO 38/2, 286, ch. 29.

²⁶ Homily 14, PO 38/2, 412, ch. 18, and Homily 36, PO 36/3, 468 and 470.

²⁷ Ed. M. Jugie, *Homélies mariales byzantines. Textes grecs édités et traduits en latin*, PO 16/3, cols 442–7; col. 442, ch. 1, 4–20. Since Jugie (1922) Abraham has been dated to between 530 and 553; however, in view of van Esbroeck's dating of Justinian's letter fixing the feast on 25 March, as well as the preoccupations of Anastasios of Antioch with establishing the date of the feast (see below), we may have to date him one or two decades later.

²⁸ Different in Romanos, where Gabriel wonders in amazement how the Most High could want to connect himself with lowly humans: *Kontakion* 9.2, SC 110, 22.

²⁹ PO 16/3, col. 445. 5–21.

³⁰ PO 16/3, col. 445. 24–5.

³¹ PO 16/3, col. 445. 25–40.

³² PO 16/3, col. 446. 5 (correctly supplied by the editor).

From Anastasios, who was twice patriarch of Antioch (558–70, 593–99), we probably have two homilies on what is now clearly a festal celebration of the Annunciation.³³ Both are edited in *Patrologia Graeca* in texts of inferior quality.³⁴ In the first homily the preacher is preoccupied – as far as we can judge from the edited text – with establishing the date of the feast on 25 March and connecting it with spring and new life. He maintains that the creation of the human being too took place on this significant date,³⁵ an argument that was to be repeated and embellished in a work attributed to Maximos the Confessor some decades later. At the end of the second homily we find a short hymn to Mary, where she is addressed as the ladder to heaven, the gate of paradise and the like, but no intercessory role is assigned to her. In neither of Anastasios's homilies does the Theotokos figure largely, and indeed in the second homily the emphasis is on Gabriel, not Mary. The designation Theotokos which occurs in the titles of both homilies may not be original, because in the body of the homilies Anastasios prefers the terms *παρθένος*, *Θεοῦ μήτηρ*, and *Θεομήτορ* (Mother of God).

It is only with Sophronios of Jerusalem (634–8), I am going to argue, that we find an established and unexcused feast of the Annunciation celebrated by a high-flown homily in which Mary is centre-stage.³⁶ One of the features of this long piece (35 columns in *Patrologia Graeca*) is the repeated use of the threefold *εὐαγγέλια* or 'good tidings'.³⁷ Sophronios begins with an extensive consideration of Trinitarian and Incarnational theology, including denunciations of heretical and non-Christian groups, much as in the patriarch's *Synodical Letter*,³⁸ and only after nine columns does the preacher really embark on the Annunciation theme, most of which is treated by exchanges between Gabriel and Mary³⁹ before Sophronios turns to some reflections on

³³ CPG 6948 and 6949.

³⁴ PG 89, cols 1376–85 and 1385–9. On the poor quality of these texts see G. Weiss, *Studia Anastasiana I. Studien zum Leben, zu den Schriften und zur Theologie des Patriarchen Anastasius I. von Antiochien*, *Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia* 4 (Munich, 1965), 92. On the question of the authenticity of some of them see CPG 6947–51.

³⁵ PG 89, col. 1384AB.

³⁶ CPG 7638, PG 87/3, cols 3217–88. The homily also survives in a Georgian version. John Duffy is currently preparing a critical edition of all of Sophronios's homilies; any comments of a close textual nature can only be provisional until we have this new edition. His discovery of fragments of a hitherto unknown homily on the Circumcision (paper presented at the Fifteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, August 2007) sounds another note of caution. Sophronios's homilies have received modern translations into both Italian and French: A. Gallico, *Sofronio di Gerusalemme. Le Omelie* (Rome, 1991); J. de la Ferrière and M.-H. Congourdeau, eds and trans, *Sophrone de Jérusalem. Fêtes chrétiennes à Jérusalem* (Paris, 1999).

³⁷ PG 87/3, cols 3217A, 3221B, 3225C, 3228A, 3284B, 3285B (cf. 3285D), 3288A.

³⁸ Sophronios, *Synodical Letter* (CPG 7635), ed. R. Riedinger, *ACO*, ser. 2, vol. 2/1 (Berlin, 1990), 410–95 at 418.6–430.9 (Trinitarian) and 430.11–466.17 (Christological). See P. Allen, *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy. The Synodical Letter and Other Documents* (Introduction, Texts, Translations, and Commentary), *Oxford Early Christian Texts* (Oxford, 2009), 74–117.

³⁹ As far as PG 87/3, col. 3277B.

the Lucan account. Mary is referred to throughout as παρθένος, Θεοῦ μήτηρ, παρθενομήτορ (Virgin mother), Θεομήτορ, or combinations of these, but not once as Theotokos.

Once Sophronios gets going on his theme, we encounter a high Mariology combined with a high-flown rhetorical style. After his initial greeting to Mary, Gabriel is made to say:

You have adorned nature;
 You have surpassed the ranks of angels;
 You have put the splendour of the archangels in the shade;
 You have demonstrated that the seats of the Thrones are second to you;
 You have reduced the loftiness of the Dominations;
 You have outstripped the leaders of the Principalities;
 You have strained the strength of the Powers;
 You have proceeded as a virtue more virtuous than the Virtues;
 You have overcome the many-eyed gaze of the Cherubim with earthly eyes;
 You have flown past the six wings of the Seraphim with wings of your soul moved by God.

In short, he maintains, Mary has surpassed all creation.⁴⁰

Mary is said by Sophronios to be troubled in her mind, and to 'ransack the words with calculations, calculating to herself and searching for the purport of the angel's words'.⁴¹ For she was indeed full of human sagacity and admitted nothing of what had been said without due examination. Knowing the trick played on Eve, she was scared and afraid in case the treacherous serpent should play a second trick – on her this time.⁴² At this, Gabriel praises Mary's caution and sagacity and outlines to her the singularity of her position as God's favoured one. This leads him to turn the tables on her with regard to fear, saying that on the contrary when he looks at her he is filled with fear and dread. This, of course, is because he is but the servant of God, whereas she will be God's mother. The angel continues with his message, until Mary objects to the miraculous conception and birth which have been announced to her, saying that she knows how women's bodies work and has examined conceptions which have occurred according to the laws of nature, but none of this has happened without sexual intercourse. Only at this point does she say: 'How can this be, since I do not know man?' (Lk 1:34a). A further

⁴⁰ PG 87/3, col. 3237C–D: Ἀνθρώπων τὴν φύσιν ἐκόσμησας. Ἀγγέλων τὰς τάξεις νενίκησας· τῶν Ἀρχαγγέλων τὰς φωταυγείας ἀπέκρυψας· τῶν Θρόνων τὰς προεδρίας, δευτέρας σου ἀπέδειξας· τῶν Κυριοτήτων τὸ ὕψος ἐσμίκρυνας· τῶν Ἀρχῶν τὰς καθηγήσεις προέδραμες· τῶν Ἐξουσιῶν τὸ σθένος ἠνεύρωσας· τῶν Δυνάμεων δυναμωτέρα προελήλυθας δύναμις· τὸ τῶν Χερουβὶμ πολυόμματον γήϊνοις ὀφθαλμοῖς ὑπερέβαλες· τὸ τῶν Σεραφὶμ ἑξαπτέρυγον ψυχῆς θεοκινήτοις πτεροῖς ὑπερβέβηκας. The entire angelic host is present in Sophronios's encomium, but in an order different from that of (ps-) Dionysios, *Celestial Hierarchy* 7–9.

⁴¹ PG 87/3, cols 3241D–3244A: καὶ τοὺς λόγους τοῖς λογισμοῖς ἀνεσκάλευε, λογισομένη καθ' ἑαυτὴν καὶ μαστεύουσα τῶν ἀγγελικῶν ῥημάτων τὴν δύναμιν.

⁴² PG 87/3, col. 3244A.

objection put into Mary's mouth by Sophronios is that the angel is unaware of the fact that she had a single-sex, segregated upbringing and has been kept pure,⁴³ being brought up from birth in the Holy of Holies – and here the homilist is clearly drawing on the *Protevangelion of James*. Mary then justifies her doubts, adding that she will not accept the angel's salutation without sagacious inquiry, without wise examination, without true scrutiny, lest she be hoodwinked and follow in Eve's footsteps, leaving humanity in a worse state than after the Fall. She continues by stating that Eve's fall has made her more prudent and sensible, and she promises never to become a second Eve. While the connection between Eve and Mary and between the serpent and Gabriel is a favourite theme in homilies on Luke 1:26–38, nowhere in the surviving homilies do we find Mary so confident.⁴⁴

In the face of such human self-assuredness, what can an archangel do? Repackage his salutation, of course:

I hail [you] observing your sobriety.
 I hail [you] understanding your caution.
 I hail [you] looking at your good sense, even if you speak against my salutation. For I do not judge that your words arise from disbelief, nor do I perceive that your speech arises from contradiction, but from wise and sagacious inquiry and a mind and disposition desirous of investigating.⁴⁵

Gabriel then recapitulates his message. According to Sophronios, '[a]gain the all-holy Virgin, who possessed fearless resolve, answered him with lips that did not tremble'.⁴⁶ While conceding that nothing of course is impossible for God, she points out that nonetheless nothing of what has been announced to her has happened so far – in other words, because of her extended objections, in this homily the conception is not portrayed as instantaneous with the word 'hail'.⁴⁷ She goes on to enumerate the sterile women in the Old Testament who conceived and bore children, but insists that this is different from saying

⁴³ PG 87/3, col. 3244 B–C. A similar objection in CPG 1776, PG 10, col. 1157A, where Mary is said to be perplexed not by the angel's message but by the presence of a male.

⁴⁴ Contrast, for example, CPG 4519 (cf. 4628), variously attributed to Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Proklos and Makarios of Philadelphia, PG 10, cols 1172A–1177B at cols 1172A and 1177A; CPG 1775, PG 10, cols 1145–56 at col. 1148D; CPG 1776, PG 10, cols 1156–69 at col. 1157B. On the Eve–Mary theme in early Christian literature see R.E. Brown, K.P. Donfried, J.A. Fitzmeier and J. Reumann, eds, *Mary in the New Testament. A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars* (Philadelphia PA, New York and Toronto, 1978), 255–6; for the theme in Greek homilies on the Annunciation see Conostas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 282–90.

⁴⁵ PG 87/3, col. 3265C–D: Χαίρω σου θεωρῶν τὸ νηφάλιον· χαίρω σου κατανοῶν τὴν ἀσφάλειαν· χαίρω σου βλέπων τὴν φρόνησιν, κἂν τοῖς ἐμοῖς ἀντιφθέγγῃ προσφθέγμασιν. Οὐ γὰρ ἀπιστίας κρίνω τὰ ῥήματα, οὐδ' ἀντιλογίας οἶδα τὰ φθέγματα, ἀλλὰ σοφῆς καὶ διανοίας ζητητικῆς καὶ φρονήσεως.

⁴⁶ PG 87/3, col. 3265C: Πρὸς ὃν καὶ πάλιν ἡ παναγία Παρθένος θάρσος ἀδείμαντον ἔχουσα, ἀτρόμοις ἀποκρίνεται χεῖλεσιν.

⁴⁷ *Pace* Conostas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, p. 297, n. 74.

that a Virgin will conceive. In a final act of self-justification, the Virgin tells Gabriel that she does not disbelieve God's command. After all, she did not say: 'This will not happen to me because I do not know man', but 'How will this happen to me?'⁴⁸

(Sophronios would be aghast to know that it is high Mariological interpretations such as this which have led some Christian feminists to claim Mary as patroness of reproductive choice, on the grounds that her conversation with Gabriel demonstrates that she is in control of her own body and sexuality.⁴⁹)

Mary finally agrees to the angel's message, Gabriel returns to heaven, and the conception is effected. The remainder of the homily has a festal and Christological tone.

At this point I would like to work backwards by contrasting the picture of Mary in Sophronios's homily with that in a homily which has a vexed transmission and is partly the work of Proklos of Constantinople,⁵⁰ whose depictions of Mary are commonly taken as a watershed in the development of the Marian cult. Part of this homily is prose, and part poetry; the poetical part appears to be that of a later author. In the prose part Gabriel says to Mary: 'You have the understanding of an earthling – how will you be able to learn the will of heaven?',⁵¹ and: 'Do you want to learn things that are beyond you?'⁵² The theme of Mary's ignorant intransigence is developed further in a rhetorical passage attributed to Proklos:

When you hear about mysteries you should marvel, not examine; beseech, not investigate; venerate, not quarrel; sing hymns, not be nosy; reflect, not enquire; seek what is necessary, not be nosy with the infinite; learn what is useful, not meddle with what is incomprehensible.⁵³

We may be very surprised to see the preacher of what has been described as 'perhaps the most famous sermon on the Mother of God in the history of Christianity',⁵⁴ referring, of course, to Proklos's Homily 1 on the Holy Virgin Theotokos, depicting Gabriel giving condescending advice to Mary, and indeed, as I have already said, the textual transmission of the homily is

⁴⁸ PG 87/3, col. 3268B–C.

⁴⁹ See Wright 'Introduction', in *Chosen by God*, 6.

⁵⁰ CPG 5805 (PG 65, cols 721–57). Extensively studied by Leroy, *L'homilétique de Proclus*, 298–324, and R. Caro, *La Homiletica Mariana Griega en el Siglo V*, Marian Library Studies n.s. 3–4 (2 vols, Dayton OH, 1972), vol. 2, 308–44.

⁵¹ PG 65, col. 739B.

⁵² PG 65, col. 739D.

⁵³ PG 65, col. 745A: "Ὅτε περὶ μυστηρίων ἀκούεις, θαυμάζεις, οὐκ ἐξιχνιάζεις ὀφείλεις· ἰκετεύειν, οὐ τρακτεύειν· εὐσεβεῖν, οὐ φιλονικεῖν· ὕμνοлогεῖν, οὐ πολυπραγμανεῖν· μελετᾶν, οὐκ ἐρευνᾶν· ζητεῖν τὰ δέοντα, οὐ πολυπραγμανεῖν τὰ ἀπέραντα· διδάσκεσθαι τὰ συμφέροντα, οὐ περιεργάζεσθαι τὰ ἀκατάληπτα.

⁵⁴ Conostas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 129. See also L.M. Peltomaa, 'Die berühmteste Marien-Predigt der Spätantike. Zur chronologischen und mariologischen Einordnung der Predigt der Proklos. Mit einem Anhang von Johannes Koder: Übersetzung der Marien-Predigt', *JÖB* 54 (2004), 77–96.

quite problematic. Nonetheless it contains a wholesome lesson, namely that we should try to take each homily from a given author on a case-by-case basis. A second point here is that some two hundred years after Proklos, Gabriel's condescending advice to Mary would be an unthinkable inclusion in a Greek homily.

Homilies on the Hypapante

The feast of the Hypapante (lit. 'meeting' or 'encounter'), or the liturgical commemoration of the Presentation of the child Jesus in the temple to Simeon, according to the account in Luke 2:22–40, certainly originated in Jerusalem,⁵⁵ and the stationary liturgy associated with it there was witnessed by the Western pilgrim Egeria as early as 381–4. At that time it was celebrated on 14 February, commemorating the purification ceremony on the fortieth day after the birth of Christ (cf. Lev 12:1–4).⁵⁶ According to George Kedrenos, it was in 527, in the reign of Justin I, that the feast of the Hypapante was introduced into Constantinople;⁵⁷ according to Theophanes, in 542 Justinian instituted the feast on 2 February, seemingly after an epidemic, or perhaps a visitation of the plague.⁵⁸ This directive appears to have been generalised in the East under Emperor Justin II (565–78), if we are to believe Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos,⁵⁹ but in Constantinople the date of the feast also seems to have reverted, at least temporarily, to 14 February in the reign of Emperor Maurice (582–602). Because the Hypapante came to be one of the five great Mariological feasts and one of the twelve pre-eminent feasts in the Byzantine liturgical calendar,⁶⁰ it will be worthwhile examining the development of the portrayal of the Theotokos in the early homiletical tradition of this celebration.⁶¹

⁵⁵ See H. Leclercq, 'Présentation de Jésus au Temple (Fête de la)', *DACL* 14 (1948), cols 1722–9.

⁵⁶ CChr, ser.lat 175, 72 = SC 21, 207. See further M. Aubineau, *Les homélies festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem*, Subsidia Hagiographica 59 (2 vols, Brussels, 1978), vol. 1, 2–4.

⁵⁷ I. Bekker, ed., *Historiarum compendium* 1 (Bonn, 1838), 641.

⁵⁸ C. de Boor, ed., *Chronographia* 1, A.M. 6034 (Leipzig, 1883), 222. There is no comment on this point by C. Mango and R. Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History, A.D. 284–813* (Oxford, 1997), 322. See further, van Esbroeck, 'La lettre de l'empereur Justinien', 351–71, and 'Encore la lettre', 442–4; M. Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians. Kontingenzerfahrungen und Kontingenzenbewältigungen im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr.*, *Hypomnemata* 147 (Göttingen, 2003), 570–86.

⁵⁹ *Historiae Ecclesiastica* 17, PG 147, col. 292.

⁶⁰ See *ODB* 2, cols 961–2 and 868–9, respectively; P. Allen, 'The Greek homiletic tradition of the feast of the Hypapante: the place of Sophronios of Jeruslaem', in Belke, Kislinger, Külzer and Stassinopoulou, eds, *Mediterranea Byzantina*, 1–2.

⁶¹ I have given an overview of this from the time of Origen to the seventh century in 'The role of Mary in the early Byzantine feast of the Hypapante', in K. Demura and N. Kamimura, eds, *Patristica*, Supplementary vol. 2. Festschrift in Honour of Shinro Kato on His 80th Birthday (Nagoya, 2006), 1–22.

The Lucan pericope on the presentation in the temple contains two potentially troublesome spots from a Mariological perspective: firstly, the fact that after the miraculous conception the Virgin and her child had to undergo a rite of purification and secondly, the words spoken by Simeon to Mary: 'and a sword will pierce your heart' (Lk 2:35a). The first of these problems was addressed by Amphilochios of Ikonion in a homily associated with the feast only at a later date, where the words of Exodus 13:2, 12 (Lk 2:23), 'Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord', are put into the mouth of an imaginary interlocutor who claims that on these grounds Mary did not remain a virgin. This the homilist counters by citing Ezekiel 44:1-2: 'This is the gate of the Lord and he will go in and go out and the gate will remain shut.' These pericopes from Exodus and Ezekiel, somewhat infelicitously juxtaposed, were to become normative in homiletic explanations of the Purification.⁶²

Simeon's words, after their rather negative interpretation by Origen in his Homily 17 on the Gospel of Luke,⁶³ received continuous attention from both Greek and Latin writers in the Patristic period,⁶⁴ some of whom held the opinion that the 'sword' meant that Mary had died a violent death.⁶⁵ Origen's view was that if at the time of the Passion all the apostles were scandalised by events, then Mary could not escape being scandalised too, as Simeon had foretold. In fact, continues the argument, if she did not experience scandal, Jesus did not die for her sins. The earliest homilies which we have for the feast of the Hypapante, those of Amphilochios of Ikonion⁶⁶ and Cyril of Alexandria,⁶⁷ were not written for that particular liturgical occasion. Amphilochios's homily seems to have become associated with the feast only at a later date, while Cyril's appears to be a fusion and elaboration of his exegetical homilies 2 and 3 on the Lucan text, customised by a later compiler to fit the feast-day. In the former we find a mitigation of Origen's negative portrayal of Mary, although in some way Amphilochios still attributes a moral fault to her. Cyril, for his part, interprets the sword as the pain felt by the Virgin when she saw

⁶² See e.g. Aubineau, *Les homélies festales*, vol. 1, 26.5-6, and 28. 9-30, 15, and Sophronios and Leontios of Neapolis, below. Wright, 'Mary in the New Testament', in *Chosen by God*, 30, points to the 'extraordinarily improper role' which Old Testament texts played in Mariology from the Patristic period onwards.

⁶³ SC 87, 250-63 at 256 and 258. On Origen's Mariology in general, see H. Crouzel, ed., *Homélies sur S. Luc: texte latin et fragments grecs*, SC 87 (Paris, 1962), 11-64.

⁶⁴ On this treatment see the magisterial work of J.M. Alonso, 'La espada de Simeon (Lc. 2, 35a) en la exegesis de los Padres', in *Maria in Sacra Scriptura: Acta Congressus Mariologici-Mariani in Republica Dominicana anno 1965 celebrati 4; De Beata Virgine Maria in Evangeliiis synopticiis* (Rome, 1967), 183-285.

⁶⁵ This appears to have been put forward first by Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 78.11. It was rejected by, among others, Ambrose, *Commentary on Luke* 2:61, and Augustine, *Letter* 149.

⁶⁶ CPG 3232 (C. Datema, ed., *Amphilochius Iconiensis Opera. Orationes, pluraque alia quae supersunt, nonnulla etiam spuria*, CChr ser.gr 3 [Turnhout and Leuven, 1978]), 11-73.

⁶⁷ CPG [5256] 5207, PG 77, cols 1039-49. On the difficulties of this text see Caro, *La Homiletica Mariana Griega* 1, 130-48.

her son crucified, not knowing that he would rise from the dead. 'And don't be surprised if the Virgin didn't know', says Cyril, 'when we find even the holy apostles themselves showing little faith on this score.'⁶⁸ This portrayal of Mary is consistent with that in Cyril's Commentary on John, where she is treated as just one of the group of women at the cross who are 'lovers of tears'; she is inferior to the apostles and in emotional disarray as she witnesses the Crucifixion. It has been argued, however, that we should attribute this very negative portrayal of Mary not to Origen's influence but rather to the personal views of the patriarch of Alexandria on women.⁶⁹ Because of the state of the textual transmission of both homilies I do not consider it prudent to examine the homilists' Marian epithets.

With the three surviving homilies on the Hypapante by Hesychios of Jerusalem, who died after 450, we have the first authentic panegyric homilies proper to the feast.⁷⁰ The word Theotokos appears in the titles of two homilies, and Hesychios favours this with or without the epithet *παρθένος* in his preaching. He calls the occasion the 'feast of feasts, sabbath of sabbaths, holy feast of holy feasts',⁷¹ and 'the mother of all feasts',⁷² but it is clear that the celebration at this stage is still a Dominical one. Neither Joseph on the one hand nor Mary and the baby on the other needed purification, maintains Hesychios, but they underwent the ritual for our sakes, just as Christ submitted to baptism and to the Passion for our sakes.⁷³ The sword is interpreted as the state of being in two minds and as uncertainty, because even if Mary were Theotokos, explains the homilist, she was still human like us.⁷⁴ We find in Hesychios a reasonably developed Mariology, where no fault is attributed to Mary and the sword is interpreted in terms of her humanity. In other words, we have here an attenuation of the exegesis of Origen.⁷⁵

We come now to surviving sixth- and seventh-century homilies on the Hypapante, of which we have three authentic edited pieces.

The first of these is the second surviving homily of Abraham of Ephesos, which deals in sober exegetical fashion with the Lucan narrative of the Hypapante.⁷⁶ In a matter-of-fact way the purification is explained as fulfilling

⁶⁸ PG 77, col. 1049C: Καὶ μὴ τοὶ θαυμάσιος εἰ ἠγγνόσεν ἡ Παρθένος, ὅπου καὶ αὐτοὺς τοὺς ἁγίους ἀποστόλους ὀλιγοπιστοῦντας εὐρήσομεν περὶ τούτου.

⁶⁹ See G. Jouassard, 'L'interprétation par S. Cyrille de la scène de Marie au pied de la croix', in *Virgo Immaculata: Acta Congressus Mariologici-Mariani Romae anno 1954 celebrati* 4 (Rome, 1955), 28–47 at 30–7.

⁷⁰ The two Greek homilies (CPG 6565 and 6566), are edited by Aubineau, *Les homélies festales*, vol. 1, 24–42 and 61–74; the Georgian version of the third homily (CPG 6580) is edited by G. Garitte, 'L'homélie géorgienne d'Hésychius de Jérusalem sur l'Hypapante', *Le Muséon* 84 (1971), 353–72.

⁷¹ Homily 1, Aubineau, *Les homélies festales*, vol. 1, 24.1–3.

⁷² Homily 3, Garitte, 'L'homélie géorgienne', 362.

⁷³ Homily 1, Aubineau, *Les homélies festales*, vol. 1, 26.1–28.31.

⁷⁴ Homily 1, Aubineau, *Les homélies festales*, vol. 1, 40. 12–15.

⁷⁵ See further Alonso, 'L'espada', 248.

⁷⁶ CPG 7381, PO 16/1, 448–54.

the Law.⁷⁷ The words of Simeon to Mary, says Abraham, do not seem like a blessing at all, but the homilist and his audience *do* understand both the blessing and the prophecy because the events have in fact taken place.⁷⁸ The homilist attacks Jews and heretics as he proceeds, and ends with a hymn of praise to Mary so high-flown in contrast to the rest of the sober piece that it has to be a later addition. To be noted in this addition is that Mary is assigned an intercessory role. In the genuine part of the homily the favoured Marian epithet is 'Virgin', but on one occasion Theotokos is used.⁷⁹ With regard to the sword at the time of the Passion, Abraham takes a decidedly psychological stand:

I mean that at that time her soul was split in two *as if* (ὡς) by a sword, when she recalled the words of the angel, spoken to her in the Gospel, and how she conceived without seed; when she underwent that birth and did not wear out her virginity; when she saw the countless miracles performed by him (sc. her son); and how she rejoiced in them as his mother. And all of these events the Virgin conjured up for herself in the one act of thought. But in the other [act of thought], she saw him as a human being reviled, hit, whipped, hit on the head with reeds, (etc.) ... Consequently each [of these acts of thought] was sufficient to cut the soul of the pure one in two, *as if* (ὡς) by a dagger.⁸⁰

Here we find a further attenuation of the exegesis of Origen, where Mary's schizophrenia or mental vivisection⁸¹ in the face of the metaphorical 'sword' precludes any imputation of moral fault.

Our second example, dating from the seventh century, comes from Sophronios of Jerusalem.⁸² It is a high-style panegyric piece, and from the many references to the celebrations of the day and to audience participation it is obvious that it was written specifically for the feast. Yet it is still not truly Mariological, although Mary is paid due honour within a Christological context. While, unlike in his homily on the Annunciation Sophronios uses the term Theotokos, his preferred epithets are παρθένος, θεομήτωρ, παρθενομήτορ or combinations of these.

The purification is said to be necessary if Christ's human nature is truly human, and it is designed for the stupefaction and consternation of the

⁷⁷ Jugie, cols 24. 4–25.15.

⁷⁸ Jugie, col. 450.17–20.

⁷⁹ PO 16/3, 448, 9.

⁸⁰ Jugie, col. 452.12–23 and 27–9: Καὶ γὰρ ὡς ὑπὸ ῥομφαίας μερίζεται εἰς δύο κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον ἡ αὐτῆς ψυχὴ, ὅτε εἰς νοῦν ἐλάμβανε τὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου ῥήματα, τὰ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελισμῷ λεχθέντα αὐτῇ, καὶ ὅπως ἀσπόρως τὴν σύλληψιν ἔσχε, ὅτε τὸν τόκον ἐκείνον ὑπέμεινε καὶ τὴν παρθενίαν οὐκ ἔτριψε, ὅτε τὰ μύρια ἑώρα θαύματα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τελούμενα, καὶ ὡς τεκοῦσα ἐνεκαυχᾶτο. Καὶ ταῦτα πάντα ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ λογισμῷ ἡ παρθένος ἐν ἑαυτῇ ἀνέπλαττεν ἐν δὲ τῷ ἑτέρῳ, ὡς ἀνθρωπὸν ἑώρα ὑβριζόμενον, ῥαπιδόμενον, φραγελλούμενον, καλαμῷ τὴν κεφαλὴν τυπτόμενον... Ἰκανὰ οὖν ἐκάτερα ἦν, τὴν ψυχὴν ὡς ἐπὶ μαχαίρας διατεμεῖν τῆς ἀγνῆς.

⁸¹ This is the phrase of Alonso, 'L'espada', 245–6.

⁸² CPG 7641, H. Usener, ed., *Sophronii de Praesentatione Domini sermo*, Programma Universitatis Bonnensis, August 1889, cols 8–18 = PG 87, cols 3287–302 (Latin trans.). Emendations in Th. Nissen, *BZ* 39 (1939), 94–9. French trans. in de la Ferrière and Congourdeau, eds, *Sophrone de Jérusalem*, 87–111.

Manichaean-like followers of Eutyches.⁸³ Sophronios gets around the stumbling-block of the sword by stating twice that the sword will not be there for long and will not transfix Mary completely:

A sword of uncertainty will pass through your soul and a dagger of consternation will run through your mind ... but it will not stay there, nor will the sword assume any permanence whatsoever as it goes through you. I mean, O Mother of God (θεομήτωρ), that you will never forget your marvellous conception and your wonderful birth-giving, and if you are struck by human consternation at the events at the time of the Crucifixion which is inexplicable ... considering all these events you will become astonished for a short time, but you will not appear to be in doubt any further. I mean that the sword of this considerable and terrible consternation will pass through your soul and mind, but it will not stay there.⁸⁴

While Sophronios evinces a developed Mariology and a purified exegesis of Simeon's prophecy to the Theotokos compared with that of other authors, the feast of the Hypapante in the 630s still does not centre on Mary but remains a Dominical celebration.

Our third piece, from the seventh-century preacher Leontios of Neapolis in Cyprus, is, like that of Sophronios, panegyric.⁸⁵ The title of the homily in the manuscripts reads: 'On Simeon and the occasion when he took the Lord into his arms'. Although Leontios uses the title Theotokos on one occasion during the course of his preaching, he prefers the epithets θεομήτωρ, παρθένος or μήτηρ. Reminding his audience that they have already celebrated the Nativity,⁸⁶ Leontios cites Luke 2:22: 'When the days of purification were fulfilled according to the Law of Moses', explaining that this refers to the purification of both Mary and the baby, and of the 'supposed' father, Joseph. In feigned confusion the homilist addresses the evangelist, asking why, if Gabriel told the Mother of God (θεομήτορι) and all-holy Virgin that she would be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, she would then need purification.⁸⁷ Luke is given right of reply, which he uses to assert that he has not forgotten what he wrote earlier. Leontios then explains the paradoxes of the Incarnation, concluding that the purification took place in accordance with the Law.⁸⁸ In the course of this explanation Mary is said to be the undefiled and unmarried Virgin and mother.

⁸³ Usener, col. 12b. 7–25.

⁸⁴ Usener, cols 15b.213, 30–16a.2, 16–2: δισταγμοῦ ῥομφαία τὴν ψυχὴν διελεύσεται καὶ τὸν νοῦν διαδράμοι καταπλήξεως μάχαιρα... ἀλλ' οὐ στήσεται, οὐδὲ μονὴν ἢ ῥομφαία τὸ σύνολον σχοίη παρὰ σοὶ διοδεύσα· οὐ γὰρ εἰς λήθην ποτὲ τῆς ἐκ σοῦ θεσπεσίας συλλήψεως καὶ τῆς ἐκ σοῦ θαυμασίας γεννήσεως, ὧ θεομήτωρ, ἐλάσειας, καὶ εἰ τῶν γεννησομένων ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς ἀρρήτου σταυρώσεως ἀνθρωπίνην κατάπληξιν δέξαιο,... ταῦτα γὰρ ἅπαντα βλέπουσα πρὸς βραχὺ γενήσῃ κατάπληκτος· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπὶ πλέον φανήσῃ διστάζουσα· διελεύσεται γὰρ τὴν σὴν ψυχὴν καὶ διάνοιαν τῶν τοσοῦτων ῥομφαία φοβερῶν καταπλήξεων· ἀλλ' οὐ στήσεται·

⁸⁵ CPG 7880, PG 93, cols 1565–81.

⁸⁶ PG 93, col. 1568D.

⁸⁷ PG 93, col. 1569A–C.

⁸⁸ PG 93, cols 1569C–1572A.

Next the preacher engages the girl in conversation, asking why she is presenting her child to the Lord in the temple when she knows from Gabriel's words that the baby is the Son of God and Lord. In her reply she evinces biblical and theological expertise:

I know, said the blessed Virgin, that he is both the Son of God and the Lord, the one who is at the same time my maker and son, whom I hold in my arms as a baby because of his love of humankind. But I am eager to present him to that one about whom my forefather David sang through the Spirit as follows: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool"'. See, the Father is Lord. See, the Son is Lord too, who gave rise to the text. But even if there is talk of two Lords, their lordship is one, just as then their divinity is one as well. This is why I am eager to present my Lord to that Lord, from whom in his divinity, he will not be separated, neither before his conception in my womb, nor now, nor ever.⁸⁹

Further on, Leontios asks rhetorically why Simeon blessed both Mary and Joseph but spoke only to Mary. The reply is that the prophet was led by the Spirit and knew that Mary was the true mother of the baby, whereas Joseph was the father in name only. Mary is called the unmarried and holy Virgin⁹⁰ and the sword is interpreted as follows: 'I think [says Leontios] that by the sword is meant the test (δοκιμασία) which came upon the holy Virgin at the cross because of her pain. For it went through her without causing harm, with a glance as it were, not striking her.'⁹¹

At the end of the homily Mary is said to be holy and ever-Virgin. With Leontios, even more than with Sophronios,⁹² we see a sanitised treatment of Mary, with no dwelling on her perplexity at Simeon's words of blessing and with an interpretation of the sword which, in a slightly metaphorical manner,⁹³ imputes no great suffering to her and certainly no moral failing. She is an assured figure, who is even in charge theologically. We have here a developed Mariology with emphasis on her immaculate state and continuing virginity, and, despite the stress on Simeon in its title, she is accorded a place

⁸⁹ PG 93, col. 1572C–D: Οἶδα, φησὶν ἡ μακαρία Παρθένος, ὅτι καὶ Υἱὸς Θεοῦ ἔστιν καὶ Κύριος, ὁ ἐμὸς πλάστης ἐν ταύτῳ καὶ υἱὸς, ὃν ὡς βρέφος διὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ φιλανθρωπίαν ἐναγκαλίζομαι· ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνῳ τοῦτον παραστήσαι σπουδάζω, περὶ οὗ ὁ ἐμὸς προπάτωρ Δαβὶδ, διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐμελώδησε λέγων· Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τῷ Κυρίῳ μου, Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου. Ἴδου Κύριος ὁ Πατὴρ· ἴδου καὶ Κύριος ὁ Υἱός, πρὸς ὃν ὁ λόγος ἐγένετο. Ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ δύο Κύριοι λέγονται, μία τούτων ἡ κυριότης, ὡσπερ οὖν καὶ μία τούτων ἡ κυριότης, ὡσπερ οὖν καὶ μία ἡ θεότης. Αὐτῷ οὖν τῷ Κυρίῳ παραστήσαι τὸν Κυριόν μου σπουδάζω, οὐ κατὰ τὴν θεότητα, οὔτε πρὸ τῆς ἐν γαστρὶ μου κνοφορίας, οὔτε νῦν, ἀλλ' οὔτε πώποτε χωρισθῆσεται.

⁹⁰ PG 93, col. 1577C–D.

⁹¹ PG 93, col. 1580C: Ῥομφαίαν δὲ οἶμαι λέγεσθαι, τὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ γενομένην τῇ ἀγίᾳ Παρθένῳ διὰ τῆς λύπης δοκιμασίαν. Διήλθεν γὰρ αὐτὴν ἀβλαβῶς ὡς ἐν παρόδῳ, μὴ πλήξασα.

⁹² *Pace* Alonso, 'L'espada', 248, who sees Sophronios's homily as the pinnacle of the exegesis of Luke 2:35a in the Eastern tradition.

⁹³ See Alonso, 'L'espada', 252–3, on this point.

in the homily more in keeping with the Mariological status which the feast of the Hypapante was to assume in Byzantium.⁹⁴

Observations and Some Conclusions

I have been suggesting throughout this chapter that one way of approaching the development of the cult of Mary in antiquity is to study the way in which homilists accept, sanitise, or ignore negative or ambiguous passages in the New Testament relating to the Mother of God, the God-bearer. Here I have been able only to consider homilies on the feasts of the Annunciation and the Hypapante in any detail, but similar developments can be detected in other festal homilies as well. We find, for example, a quite dramatic development in the portrayals of Mary's role in the Crucifixion scene. From being scandalised, 'tear-loving' and afraid, as we encounter her in Origen, Cyril of Alexandria and others, by the seventh century she has progressed to the point of being impervious to the sword prophesied for her by Simeon. Once she has attained this stature, her humanity can be comfortably show-cased, as it is in eighth-, ninth- and tenth-century Greek homiletic literature where she is portrayed encomiastically as enduring in a human fashion her Son's Passion and death, and where her maternal tenderness is clearly linked to the economy of salvation.⁹⁵ Our approach can also be applied to the resurrection narratives, where we progress from a scenario in which Mary is not present to one where she is said to be one of the number of Marys, all of whom come and go at different times.⁹⁶ Finally, in a work attributed to Maximos the Confessor, albeit not a homily, she is portrayed as being inseparable from the tomb and having witnessed the entire act of her Son's Resurrection.⁹⁷ I am suggesting that by

⁹⁴ T. Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1997), 82.

⁹⁵ See further N. Tsironis, 'The Lament of the Virgin Mary from Romanos the Melode to George of Nicomedia. An Aspect of the Development of the Marian Cult' (unpubl. PhD thesis, University of London, 1998); I. Kalavrezou, 'The maternal side of the Virgin', in Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God*, 41–56; N. Tsironis, 'From poetry to liturgy: the cult of the Virgin in the middle Byzantine era', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God*, 91–9, esp. 93–5; M. Vassilaki and N. Tsironis, 'Representations of the Virgin and their association with the Passion of Christ', in Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God*, 457–60. See J. Baun, 'Discussing Mary's humanity in medieval Byzantium', in Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, 63–72, who points to portrayals of Mary in ninth-century apocalyptic literature where she is all too human, for example badgering and wearing down her son so that he has pity on sinners. This theme is treated more fully in *eadem*, *Tales from another Byzantium. Celestial Journey and Local Community in the Medieval Greek Apocrypha* (Cambridge, 2007), 267–318.

⁹⁶ This inclusion of Mary in the Resurrection scene may go back to Ephrem: see Brown et al., eds, *Mary in the New Testament*, 265–6; for homiletic evidence of her inclusion see Severus of Antioch, Homily 77, PO 16/5; John of Thessalonike, PG 59, cols 635–44; CPG 7922.

⁹⁷ See the *Life* of Mary by Maximos the Confessor, the first full biography of the Virgin: *Maxime le Confesseur, Vie de la Vierge*, ed. and trans. M. van Esbroeck, CSCO

monitoring the ambiguous, negative or sanitised homiletical approaches to Mary and tracking the extent to which her superwoman qualities as opposed to her human qualities are depicted, we may come closer not only to dating some pseudonymous homilies but also to pinpointing developments in the Marian cult. All this having been said, after the obvious Mariological tensions in the New Testament were removed, new scandals could easily be devised by detractors of the Virgin. Take the case of the exaggerated encratite Romanos, the sixth-century bishop of Rhosos in Cilicia, who is mercilessly attacked by Severos of Antioch for his claims that Mary's insistence on her Son providing wine at the poorly catered for wedding-feast in Cana was driven by her lasciviousness and party-going propensities.⁹⁸

If it is true, as Averil Cameron has argued, that '[a]ny history of the cult of the Virgin would have to allow for multiple developments and a high degree of social and regional variety',⁹⁹ it also appears that we have to accept some degree of contradiction or at least paradox in the evidence, even within the one genre. I have already discussed two homilies of Proklos in this regard. The *kontakia* of Romanos the Melode are regularly invoked as the vehicle *par excellence* by which the emotional aspect of Mary's role, found in Syriac poetry, made its way into Byzantine literature.¹⁰⁰ Romanos's Mary at the foot of the cross has been described as a 'rather aggressive *mater dolorosa*' with a 'natural' right to mourn, who has been assimilated in a non-biblical manner into the Passion narrative.¹⁰¹ Thus we might expect to find also in the liturgical poetry of Sophronios of Jerusalem some manipulation of biblical texts or more affective portrayals of Mary than are present in his homilies. Quite the contrary. Neither his poem on the Annunciation nor his poem on the Hypapante contains a higher or more affective Mariology than his two homilies on the same themes.¹⁰²

478 (Georgian text), 479 (French trans.), *Scriptores Iberici* 21–2 (Leuven, 1986), in vol. 479, 85–6. For assessments of this biography see S.J. Shoemaker, 'The Virgin Mary in the ministry of Jesus and the early Church according to the earliest *Life of the Virgin*', *HTR* 98 (2005), 441–67; *idem*, 'The Georgian *Life of the Virgin* attributed to Maximus the Confessor. Its authenticity (?) and importance', in A. Muraviev and B. Lourié, eds, *Mémorial R.P. Michel van Esbroeck, S.J.*, *Scrinium* 2 (St Petersburg, 2006), 307–28; *idem*, 'A mother's passion: Mary's role in the Crucifixion and Resurrection in the earliest *Life of the Virgin* and its influence on George of Nicomedia's Passion homilies', above, 53–67.

⁹⁸ Severos, Homily 119, PO 36/3. On Romanos, see further S.P. Brock, 'Some new letters of the Patriarch Severos', in E.A. Livingstone, ed., *Papers Presented to the Sixth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Studia Patristica* 12 (Berlin, 1975), 17–24 at 23–4; P. Allen, 'Severos of Antioch as pastoral carer', in M.F. Wiles and E.J. Yarnold, eds, *Papers Presented to the Thirteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Studia Patristica* 35 (Leuven, 2001), 353–68.

⁹⁹ Introduction to Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God*, xxix.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Cameron, 'The early cult of the Virgin', 12.

¹⁰¹ G.W. Dobrov, 'A dialogue with death: ritual lament and the θρῆνος Θεοτόκου of Romanos Melodos', *GRBS* 35 (1994), 385–405 at 386 and 392, referring to *Kontakion* 35, SC 128, 143–87.

¹⁰² See M. Gigante, ed., *Sophronii Anacreontica Opuscula*, Testi per esercitazioni accademiche 10–11–12 (Rome, 1957), 25–31 and 46–51, respectively.

Let us move away from liturgical works for the moment to consider other literary genres. A contrast to the restrained Mariology in Sophronios's poetry is the portrayal of Mary in three Palestinian miracle stories contemporaneous with the patriarch of Jerusalem, which are studied in this volume by Derek Krueger: the *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschos,¹⁰³ the Marian miracles related by Antony of Choziba,¹⁰⁴ and the *Life* of Mary of Egypt sometimes attributed to Sophronios but almost certainly spurious.¹⁰⁵ Krueger demonstrates that all three monastic texts attribute to the Virgin the power to regulate women's access to public space, and that she is presented as separating the sacred and the profane. A spiritual gatekeeper, she enforces women's orthodoxy and prevents heretical women from the Eucharist. In the *Life* of Mary of Egypt she 'stands at or as the gate of repentance', even being responsible for bodily and spiritual curing.¹⁰⁶ This same self-assuredness is found in the genre of narrative, if we take the work of Theodore Synkellos dealing with the Avar raid on Constantinople which occurred between AD 618/9 and 623.¹⁰⁷ Here, in the words of Bissera Pentcheva, we have passages which

offer a shocking representation of the Virgin in battle. She engages in a hand-to-hand combat with the enemies, killing the barbarians in order to protect her people. Her active belligerence, linked to her perpetual virginity, echoes qualities of the virgin warrior Athena.¹⁰⁸

A second work attributed to Theodore Synkellos, sometimes described as a homily, is more properly speaking a commemorative *λόγος* in the broad sense of the word (this is not to say that it was not delivered in some kind of liturgical or celebratory context).¹⁰⁹ It was delivered on the occasion of the re-deposition of the relic of Mary's robe in the Blachernai after the Avar raid, and contains at the end a prayer of intercession to her. What is striking in this *λόγος* is the almost total lack of biblical reference to Mary, indeed the scarcity of biblical references of any kind, a phenomenon which indeed is reproduced in the other narrative and hagiographical works treated in this section of my chapter. This suggests that if Mary is released from biblical constraints, as it were, she assumes a more powerful role, whereas in the context of the Eucharistic liturgy and their role

¹⁰³ Chapters 47–9, PG 87/3, cols 2901–5.

¹⁰⁴ *Miracula Beatae Virginis in Choziba*, ed. C. Houze, *AnalBoll* 7 (1888), 360–70.

¹⁰⁵ PG 87/3, cols 3697–726. On the authenticity see CPG 7675.

¹⁰⁶ Derek Krueger, 'Mary at the threshold: the Mother of God as guardian in the seventh-century Palestinian miracle accounts', above, 31–8.

¹⁰⁷ CPG 7936, ed. L. Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica* (Cracow, 1900), 2–37. On the uncertain date see L.M. Whitby and M. Whitby, trans., comm. and intro., *Chronicon Paschale 284–628 A.D.*, TTH 7 (Liverpool, 1989), 203–5.

¹⁰⁸ B.V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park PA, 2006), 64. Compare the account in *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. L. Dindorf (Bonn, 1832), 725, where the Virgin is 'seen' running along the city walls.

¹⁰⁹ CPG 7935, ed. F. Combefis, *Novum Auctarium* 2 (Paris, 1648), 751–86; C. Loparev, *Vizantijski Vremennik* 2 (1895), 592–612. See A. Cameron, 'The Virgin's robe: an episode in the history of early seventh-century Constantinople', *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 42–56, of which 48–56 is an English translation based on Loparev's text.

as expounders of the word of God the preachers have to stick to the scriptural texts and to work their way through the ambiguities and negativities found there in order to win for her some autonomy and stature. An investigation into the titles given to Mary in non-liturgical works and a comparison with those found in homilies would be very worthwhile, especially if combined with recent studies on Marian typology.¹¹⁰

To a certain extent the effect of abstracting Mary from biblical texts is borne out by the study of art historians. Ioli Kalavrezou, for example, points to the role of Mary as the 'prime female figure of Christian devotion' on the basis of sixth-century images, but remarks that in these images the Virgin is 'removed from any narrative content' and that the images themselves are 'symbolic or abstract images of church authority and dogma'.¹¹¹ It is not clear, however, what is meant here by 'church authority and dogma', which one would have thought would have been upheld publicly by homilists at this stage. For his part Henry Maguire observes that while Mary

begins to play a significant role in the decoration of domestic objects in the latter half of the sixth century, and more prominently in the seventh ... the beginnings of the visual invocation of the Virgin in the official and in the domestic contexts do not seem to have been contemporaneous.¹¹²

He notes further that even in the second half of the sixth century in depictions on domestic apparel Mary was not as popular as other Christian saints, or even pagan figures.

The fact that in the catalogue of 22 silver and bronze surviving armbands from the mid-sixth century to the mid-seventh there is only one portrayal of Mary,¹¹³ whereas in the more official or public lead seals she appears more frequently, roughly half as much as all other saints together,¹¹⁴ may substantiate the view that domestic or popular representations of Mary lagged behind official or public ones. However, let us remember that the argument-almost-from-silence about the cult of Mary in the case of the armbands can be replicated in homiletic literature as well, the scant role assigned to Mary in the homilies of Leontios, presbyter of Constantinople, being just one case in point.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ See e.g. L.M. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn* (Leiden, Boston MA, and Cologne, 2001); Cunningham, 'The meeting of the old and the new'; L.M. Peltomaa, 'Epithets in the Akathistos hymn', in this volume, 109–16.

¹¹¹ I. Kalavrezou, 'Exchanging embrace. The body of salvation', in Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God*, 103–15 at 104.

¹¹² H. Maguire, 'Byzantine domestic art as evidence for the early cult of the Virgin', in Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God*, 183–93 at 186–7.

¹¹³ Maguire in Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God*, 187–8.

¹¹⁴ J. Cotsonis, 'The contribution of Byzantine lead seals to the study of the cult of the saints (sixth–twelfth century)', *Byzantion* 75 (2005), 383–497, especially 400–1.

¹¹⁵ See P. Allen with C. Datema, trans., comm. and intro., *Leontius Presbyter of Constantinople. Fourteen Homilies*, *Byzantina Australiensia* 9 (Brisbane, 1991), 10.

In visual images it seems to be only after Iconoclasm that we find Mary given the title 'God-bearer' and sometimes also 'Mother of God'.¹¹⁶ This is difficult to reconcile with the fact that the title Mother of God seems to have been more dominant than God-bearer in the literature of the sixth and seventh centuries and indeed even earlier,¹¹⁷ and reinforces the idea that a thorough-going investigation into the epithets used of Mary in different genres and media is called for. This investigation, combined with a critique of the homiletic process of sanitising New Testament texts and of the apparent hagiographical tendency to play down these same texts, should take us a few steps further in studying the complex and elusive early development of the cult of Mary.

¹¹⁶ I. Kalavrezou, 'Images of the Mother: when the Virgin Mary became the *Meter Theou*', *DOP* 44 (1990), 165–72 at 168.

¹¹⁷ See Wright, 'From "God-Bearer" to "Mother of God"', 30: 'it remains remarkable that the emergence of "Mother of God" designations of Mary, patently retarded in the Greek tradition (but now, it seems, more dominant there than θεοτόκος), has so far received minimal attention. If word-use matters – a proposition incontrovertible for historians – the neglect calls for rectification.'

Section II: Epithets and Typology for Mary, the Theotokos

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Wisdom Imagery and the Mother of God¹

Margaret Barker

The Mother of God is addressed and described with many vivid images. Did these originate in the mind of the liturgist, the hymnographer, the storyteller? Or did all of these draw on an oral tradition about Mary? There is a remarkable correspondence between the titles and imagery used for her and those used to describe Wisdom in earlier biblical and pseudepigraphical texts. In this chapter, I note some of these links to older titles, and then, using three sample texts only, refer to the *Akathistos Hymn* and the Kanon of the *Akathist*² and the *Protevangelion of James*,³ to show that Mary was portrayed as the Holy Wisdom, one of the titles given to the Mother of the King in the ancient royal cult in Jerusalem.⁴

First, what is meant by ‘Wisdom’ and what is meant by ‘God’? In a Christian context, the Mother of God means the Mother of the second person of the Trinity, Christ, and Wisdom is an undefined term sometimes applied to Jesus, for example in 1 Corinthians 1:24 and Revelation 3:14–22.⁵ Both Wisdom and the Mother of God,⁶ however, have an important place in the history of Jerusalem, and the worldview of the temple is that of both Old and New Testaments.

¹ Please note that as an exception to the practice adopted elsewhere in this volume, Old Testament citations are given in the order of the Hebrew Bible first, followed by the Septuagint.

² I quote throughout from Archimandrite Ephrem Lash’s translations of the *Akathistos Hymn* and the Kanon of the *Akathist*, at <http://www.anastasis.org.uk/akathist.htm>, with some small adjustments. For the Greek versions of these texts, see *Triodion Katanyktikon* (Athens, 1983), 321–3.

³ Text in M.R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1980), 38–48; J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford, 1993; repr. 2005), 57–67.

⁴ See M. Barker, *The Great High Priest* (London, 2003), 228–61.

⁵ See M. Barker, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Which God Gave to Him to Show to His Servants What Must Soon Take Place (Revelation 1: 1)* (Edinburgh, 2000), 112–13.

⁶ This suggestion about Wisdom was first published in M. Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel’s Second God* (London, 1992), 48–69.

The Mosaic tabernacle, and all the temples later built in Jerusalem, represented the creation, divided by a veil into the visible and invisible worlds. The holy of holies, with the golden chariot throne, was the invisible world of God and the angels. It was the state of uncreated light. The veil, woven from four colours to represent the four elements, thus represented matter screening the glory of God from the material world. The holy of holies was beyond matter, and therefore beyond time, a hidden place, often called eternity. The great hall of the temple represented the material world, and was the garden of Eden, paradise, with Adam, the human being, as the high priest. Rituals in the holy of holies were rituals in eternity, and those who entered the holy of holies passed between heaven and earth. The priests were angels; the high priest was the Lord.⁷

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as the temple:

Enclosure of God who cannot be enclosed (Ikos 8)
 Best of dwellings of him who is above the seraphim (Ikos 8)
 Tabernacle of God the Word (Ikos 12)
 Greater holy of holies (Ikos 12)
 Ark gilded by the Spirit (Ikos 12)
 Unshakeable tower (Ikos 12)
 [She makes] the meadow of delight flower again (Ikos 3)⁸

In the Kanon of the *Akathist*, she is addressed as:

Palace of the king of all (Ode 1, Troparion)
 Dwelling place of the master of creation (Ode 5, Troparion)
 Spacious tabernacle of the Word (Ode 5, Troparion)
 Dwelling-place of light (Ode 8, Troparion)
 Pure Virgin who opened Eden that was shut (Ode 9, Troparion)

There was a great cultural upheaval in 623 BC, usually described as king Josiah's reform, when the religion of the temple and the kingdom was changed by force. One generation later, the Babylonians sacked the temple, but the real destruction was the work of Josiah. Piecing together various accounts and memories of those events, it is clear that he expelled a female divine figure and her cult, and imposed Old Testament monotheism as we understand it. The Moses and Exodus elements in Israel's religion came to prominence, and the older religion of the patriarchs, practised in Judah until that time, was relegated to 'the past'. All of the older divine names were attached to Yahweh, the name for Israel's God in the Moses tradition.⁹

⁷ See Barker, *The Revelation*, 12–26.

⁸ A reference to the original meaning of the garden of Eden, literally an enclosed place of delight. The Hebrew 'eden, 'of delight', is translated in Ps 35 (36):9 as τρυφή, exactly as in the *Akathistos Hymn*, Ikos 3. Mary makes Eden flower again.

⁹ See M. Barker, *The Older Testament: The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity* (London, 1987), 167–72; *eadem*, *The Great Angel*.

Before that, there had been El Shaddai and God Most High, and the sons of God, who were mighty shepherd angels ruling the nations. Yahweh was the firstborn of these sons, the guardian of Israel. He was the heavenly king whom Isaiah saw in his vision, enthroned in the temple among the seraphim (Is 6:5). Yahweh was the Son of God Most High. When the Davidic king assumed his royal power, he was anointed and enthroned, and became the God and king of his people (see Ps 68:24 [67:25]), in other words, he became the human presence of Yahweh, the Son of God Most High. He was Emmanuel, 'God with us'.

How this was understood, however, is no longer clear, and the temple ritual has to be reconstructed from fragmented texts, several very familiar to Christians. 'Unto us a child is born' (Is 9:6), sang the angels in the holy of holies, and then named the child as the angel¹⁰ who would rule in Jerusalem. Psalm 110 (109) describes how someone was begotten as the son of God in the glory of the holy ones¹¹ and became a priest like Melchizedek.

Dew and a womb are part of the process. The text is damaged beyond recovery, but another anointing text compares the anointing oil to dew, and says that this oil transformed the recipient into an angel (2 En 22).¹² Anointing was the sacrament of *theosis*, since it transformed a human into divine being, one of the resurrected. When Solomon was made king, he too became divine. He was seated on the throne of Yahweh and then worshipped as the Lord and King (1 Chron 29:20–3, a passage usually translated in English Bibles as 'worshipped the Lord and bowed down to the king', thus obscuring the fact that the Lord and the king were one and the same). One crucial text about the monarchy is damaged, another is altered by translators to make 'sense', and so something very important about the Davidic kings is obscured. They were transformed by their anointing and enthronement into sons of God, into the human presence of Yahweh. They lived the life of the holy of holies, the life of heaven. One image for this process was 'robing'; Enoch described how he was taken out of his earthly clothes, or mortal body, and vested so that he was just like the angels (2 En 22). He received his garment of glory.

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

Womb of divine Incarnation (Ikos 1)
 You through whom we were clothed with glory (Ikos 4)
 [The one who shows] the bright image of the Resurrection (Ikos 7)
 [The one who reveals] the angels' way of life (Ikos 7)
 Source of spiritual refashioning (Ikos 10)
 [The one who gives] new birth to those conceived in shame (Ikos 10)

¹⁰ Is 9:6 (LXX), the angel of great counsel; cf. the current Hebrew text where the four throne names became those of the archangels Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Uriel. See M. Barker, *The Hidden Tradition of the Kingdom of God* (London, 2007), 26.

¹¹ This is on the basis of the reconstruction of a damaged Hebrew text from the LXX and Ugaritic parallels. See Barker, *The Older Testament*, 255–7 and N. Wyatt, 'Les Mythes des Dioscures et l'idéologie royale dans les littératures d'Ougarit et d'Israël', *Revue Biblique* 103 (1996), 481–516.

¹² The text of 2 Enoch is translated in J.C. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols, London, 1983), vol. 1, 102–213.

In the Kanon of the *Akathist* she is addressed as:

Cause of the deification of all (Ode 6, Troparion)

She is also described as the source of the dew and is linked to the dew on Gideon's fleece. Now dew was an important part of the ritual birth in the holy of holies. The anointing oil, a sign of unity, was compared to dew, as in the Septuagint version of Psalm 132:2–3. Wisdom, as we shall see, was given in this sacrament, and this may have been the origin of comparing Mary to the dew. In this case, the usage must have been older than its transfer to the story of the miracle of the dew on the fleece (Judg 6:36–40).

Christians proclaimed Jesus as Yahweh: 'Jesus is the Lord'. He was human but also divine. The early Church understood the appearances of Yahweh in the Old Testament as appearances of the second person, the Son of God Most High. St John the Evangelist knew that Abraham had seen the Lord, and that Isaiah had seen him in his temple vision (Jn 8:56, 12:41).¹³ There are many similar examples in early Christian texts. Sozomen, who came from Palestine, describes how Constantine had a great church built at Mamre, where Yahweh had appeared to Abraham (Gen 18). This, he said, marked the site where the Son of God, the one born of a virgin, 'manifested himself to a godly man'.¹⁴

In the time of the monarchy, Yahweh was known as the Son of God Most High, *exactly as Gabriel described him to Mary*: 'He shall be called the Son of the Most High' (Lk 1:32). In other words, Gabriel said that Mary's son would be the Lord. Ritually, the Son of God was begotten in the holy of holies in the temple; he was the Son generated in eternity. Once installed as the high priest Melchizedek, he came forth as the anointed king, the Messiah. That crucial but unreadable verse, Psalm 110:3, mentions a womb and a morning star, 'Shahar', a name known from Ugaritic texts but usually translated as 'the womb of the morning'. Who was the mother of the Messiah, the morning star?¹⁵ Who was the mother of the Son of God Most High? Christians were reborn as children of God at their baptism, and the ancient temple birthing ritual passed into baptismal customs, for example, in the use of Psalm 2:7 in the baptism rite of the third-century Syrian Church.¹⁶ The one who was mother of the ancient kings thus came to be identified with the Mother of God and thus with the baptismal font.

Thus, in the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

Mother of the star that never sets (Ikos 5)
 Source of spiritual refashioning (Ikos 10)
 [You] who pre-figure the baptismal font (Ikos 11)

¹³ See Barker, *The Great Angel*, 190–212.

¹⁴ Sozomen, *Church History* II.4.3, B. Grillet and G. Sabbah, eds, *Sozomène, Histoire Ecclésiastique, Livres I–II*, SC 306 (Paris, 1983), 246.

¹⁵ Cf. Rev 22:16: 'Jesus said, "I am ... the bright morning star"'.
¹⁶ See R.H. Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum* (Oxford, 1929), ii.32, 93.

In the Kanon of the *Akathist* she is addressed as:

Radiant dawn (Ode 3, Troparion)

The mother of the king in Jerusalem was known as 'the great lady' (see, for example, 1 Kings 15:13, where the phrase is usually translated 'queen mother'), and so the royal couple were mother and son. Yahweh, the Lord, also had a heavenly mother. The royal couple both had counterparts in heaven. Micah, about a hundred years before king Josiah's purges, spoke of a woman in labour who would bring forth the shepherd of Israel (Mic 5:2-4), and his contemporary Isaiah gave the prophecy of the Virgin who would conceive and bear a son to be called Emmanuel (Is 7:14). Only one pre-Christian Hebrew text of this passage exists, the great Isaiah scroll from Qumran (1Q Isa^a), and one letter is different from the current Hebrew text. Isaiah 7:1 is translated in most English Bibles as, 'Ask a sign of the Lord your God', but the great scroll reads: 'Ask a sign of the *Mother* of the Lord your God', and the Emmanuel prophecy follows. There were people in the time of Jesus who knew that Yahweh had a mother. The Gospel of the Hebrews had Jesus speaking of his Mother the Holy Spirit, and she was the voice he heard at his baptism.¹⁷ Some early Hebrew Christians knew of the heavenly mother, and the Gospel of the Hebrews was quoted frequently by St Jerome.¹⁸

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

The holy Virgin (Ikoi 1.11)
 The Mother of God (Ikoi 1, 3, 6, 9, 10, 12)
 Mother of the lamb and of the shepherd (Ikos 4)

In the Kanon of the *Akathist* she is addressed as:

Queen and Mother (Ode 1, Irmos)
 Ever-virgin ... dove (Ode 9, Troparion)

The Hebrew Christians also knew of a winged woman clothed with the sun and crowned with stars, with the moon and a red dragon at her feet. The red dragon was 'the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world' (Rev 12:9). The woman was giving birth to the Messiah, and appeared in the holy of holies in a dramatic theophany, at the very moment when the seventh and last trumpet had proclaimed the kingdom of the Messiah on earth. There was lightning and thunder, earthquake and hail to announce her appearance (Rev 11:15 - 12: 6). She appears later as the bride, clothed in fine linen (Rev 19:8), who is the bejewelled holy city (Rev 21:9-10).

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

¹⁷ Fragments of the text are translated in Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 9-15.

¹⁸ Origen, *On John* 2.12; *On Jeremiah* 15.4; Jerome, *On Isaiah* 11.9; *On Ezekiel* 16.13, quoted in Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 9-10.

Downfall of the demons (Ikos 6)
 You trampled on the error of deception (Ikos 6)
 [You] who gave counsel to those robbed of understanding (Ikos 10)
 [You] who destroy the corrupter of minds (Ikos 10)
 Beam of the immaterial sun (Ikos 11)
 Ray of the moon that never sets (Ikos 11)
 Lightning flash (Ikos 11)
 Thunder that terrifies the foe (Ikos 11)

In the Kanon of the *Akathist* she is addressed as:

You that dispersed the gloom and utterly destroyed the demons of
 darkness (Ode 3, Troparion)
 City of the king of all (Ode 5, Troparion)

The Lady was a threat to rabbinic Judaism. The section of the Mishnah dealing with forbidden forms of worship says that anyone finding one of her symbols – an object depicting the sun, the moon or a dragon – had to throw it into the Dead Sea; and that trees planted or pruned into a special shape (another of her symbols) were forbidden. Their wood could not be used for baking bread or weaving cloth, and even to walk in the shade of such trees was forbidden. These were the practices of apostate cities, that is, of irregular Jews. They were not pagan practices (*Mishnah*, Aboda Zarah 3:2–7).¹⁹

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

Wood with shady leaves under which many shelter (Ikos 7)

This lady was the queen of heaven, known as ‘Wisdom’, who was the main victim of king Josiah’s purge. As a result, students of the Old Testament have not expected to find her, although she can still be glimpsed in damaged and emended texts. Where Wisdom is mentioned, she is explained as a concept or a personification, and a late addition to the tradition. The account of king Josiah’s work in 2 Kings 23 is considered normative, and the purges are described as a ‘reform’. He removed from the temple something called the Asherah, which he burned to dust and cast onto the common graves (2 Kings 23:6). It was utterly desecrated, and the houses of the prostitutes, where women wove linen garments for Asherah, were destroyed. This account, however, was written by those who supported Josiah’s purge.

Second, there is the story of Jeremiah and the refugees who fled to Egypt after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 bc, 37 years after Josiah’s purge. The prophet tried to convince them that their sins had caused the disaster, but the refugees would not listen. The disaster happened because they had ceased to worship

¹⁹ See the English translation of the text in H. Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford, 1933), 437–45. Juvenal showed that Jewish devotion to the tree symbol was well known. He satirised a poor Jewish woman by saying that she was a high priestess of the tree, a reliable mediator with highest heaven. See his *Satires* 6. 543–5, J. Willis, ed., *Iuvenalis Saturae* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1997), 87.

the queen of heaven, who had protected the city and given them food. They recalled how they had burned incense and poured libations and baked small loaves to represent her (Jer 44:15–19).

Third, there is a fragment of stylised history in 1 Enoch, which preserves much of the ancient temple tradition. Just before the temple was burned, the priests lost their vision, because they had godlessly forsaken Wisdom (1 En 93:8).²⁰

These three texts show that, until Josiah's purge, the queen of heaven, Wisdom, was the guardian of Jerusalem who gave the priests vision. Those who banished her called her Asherah and linked her to forbidden Canaanite practices, prostitutes and the host of heaven, that is, the angels. The older texts in the Old Testament describe Yahweh as the Lord of Hosts – the same hosts – but after Josiah's purge, this title was dropped. And the prostitutes, when the Hebrew is pointed differently, become holy ones, angels, in whose shrines the women wove sacred hangings.

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

You that pour light on the minds of believers (Ikos 2)
 Wonder well-known among the angels (Ikos 2)
 Defence against unseen foes (Ikos 4)
 Food that replaced the manna (Ikos 6)
 [The one who enlightens] many with knowledge (Ikos 9)
 Unbreachable wall of the kingdom (Ikos 12)

In the Kanon of the *Akathist* she is addressed as:

Guardian of all, fortress, stronghold and sacred refuge (Ode 4, Troparion)
 [The one who can] preserve [her] city from all capture by enemies (Ode 7, Troparion)
 All-blessed, protection and defence, rampart and stronghold (Ode 8, Troparion)

Memories of Josiah can be traced for centuries. When the Pentateuch was compiled in the second temple period, contemporary power struggles could be detected in the stories. In Numbers 12, for example, Miriam and Aaron challenged the sole authority of Moses. Miriam was then stricken with leprosy, the sign of divine wrath, and Aaron begged for her to be spared. She was healed, but had no further place in the story. This was the ruling family: Moses the lawgiver, Aaron the high priest and Miriam, the *older* sister who disappeared from the scene, punished for challenging Moses. Despite that story, Miriam was remembered as the great lady, the deliverer in Israel.²¹ Moses became the king, Aaron the high priest, and Miriam 'took' Wisdom. She was the ancestress of the royal house, the mother of the kings of Jerusalem.²²

²⁰ The text of 1 Enoch is translated in Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, 13–89.

²¹ *Exodus Rabbah* XXV.1, trans. S.M. Lehrman (London, 1939; repr. 1961).

²² *Exodus Rabbah* XLVIII.4.

So far, then, we see that the lady was known as the queen of heaven, Wisdom and Miriam; that is, Mary, and that she was the mother of the royal house. She gave her priests vision, and her cult had involved angels and linen hangings, wine, incense and loaves that represented her.

There were other memories of the first temple. In the time of the Messiah, when the true temple would be rebuilt, the menorah, the ark, the Spirit, the fire and the cherubim would be restored.²³ The anointing oil had been hidden in the time of Josiah, together with the manna and the high priestly staff.²⁴ All these were associated with the lady, as we shall see, and these later traditions link the return of the lady with the coming of the Messiah. The reference to restoring the menorah is curious; there *was* a menorah in the second temple, so the one to be restored must have been a different in some way.

There is also archaeological evidence: many small female figurines have been found in Judah and Jerusalem, but none can be dated after the time of Josiah.²⁵ These pillar figurines are stylised female figures, just a head with huge eyes, arms and breasts, and then a pillar base with no defined lower body or legs. Since the priests lost their vision when they abandoned Wisdom, the huge eyes may symbolise the gift of vision, and these figurines may represent the lady.

In northern Sinai there are graffiti and an inscription, dated to the eighth century BC.²⁶ They may be unconnected (drawn at different times), but if they do belong together, they form a picture of two humanoid bovine figures, a male and a female, described as Yahweh and Ashratak.²⁷ Scholars have assumed that Asherah was the consort of Yahweh, but she is more likely to have been his mother.²⁸ Further, in all of the inscriptions where the name appears – here and elsewhere – it has the form Ashratak, suggesting that the biblical form Asherah was the editors' way of expressing their disapproval, just as they made the holy ones of the temple into prostitutes.²⁹ Bovines were an important symbol in the ancient cult: the temple was purified with the blood of a bull (Ezek 45:18–20), and Solomon's golden throne was surmounted with a calf's head (1 Kings 10:19). In the Enochic histories, Adam was a white bull and Eve a heifer (1 En 85:3), and the Messiah a white bull calf (1 En 90:37).

In the Kanon of the *Akathist*, Mary is addressed as:

Heifer who gave birth ... to the unblemished sacrificial victim (Ode 3,
Troparion)

²³ *Numbers Rabbah* XV.10, trans. J.J. Slotki (London, 1939; repr. 1961).

²⁴ *Babylonian Talmud Horayoth* 12a, trans. I. Epstein (35 vols, London, 1935–52).

²⁵ R. Kletter, *The Judaean Pillar Figurines and the Archaeology of Asherah*, BAR International Series 636 (Oxford, 1996).

²⁶ G.I. Davies, *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions* (Cambridge, 1991); J.A. Emerton, 'Yahweh and his Asherah', *Vetus Testamentum* 49 (1999), 315–37.

²⁷ For full discussion and detail, see J.M. Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah* (Cambridge, 2000), 106–55.

²⁸ See Barker, *The Great High Priest*, 229–33, 302–3.

²⁹ See Barker, *The Great High Priest*, 230–2.

We can also compare neighbouring cultures. These cannot be primary evidence for the culture of Judah, but they can illuminate what is attested within the Hebrew tradition. Evidence from neighbouring Ugarit is striking.³⁰ There was a great goddess known as the Virgin Mother of the sons of God, who were the stars.³¹ She was the creatrix, known as Athirat, the Ugaritic equivalent of Asherah/Ashratah. She was the sun goddess, usually described as the great lady who tramples the sea.³² Her symbol was a spindle, and her son was both the morning star and the evening star. She suckled the crown prince. In the *Protevangelion of James*, Mary is depicted as spinning wool for the veil of the temple, and many Byzantine icons depict her with a spindle.³³ In the Kanon of the *Akathist*, she is the haven of those tossing on the deep.³⁴

The lady of Jerusalem can still be found in the Old Testament. In Proverbs 1, for example, her name has a plural form, 'Wisdoms' (Prov 1:20), a sure sign of divinity, and she calls to her foolish children who have rejected her. She longs to pour out her spirit on her people (Prov 1:23), but if they continue their foolishness, she will not hear them when they call on her (Prov 1:28). Later, she is described as the 'tree of life' (Prov 3:18), in a poem which says that she gives true riches, long life, honour and peace. Those who find her are happy, 'asher, which is a wordplay on her name 'Ashratah'.

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

[The One who] guides all to divine knowledge (Ikos 11)
Inexhaustible treasure of life (Ikos 12)

In the Kanon of the *Akathist*, she is addressed as:

[The one through whom] we are filled with joy and inherit life (Ode 7,
Troparion)
[The one through whom] the dead are given life (Ode 8, Troparion)

³⁰ See N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit. The Words of Ilmilku and his Friends* (Sheffield, 1998): the great lady who tramples the sea, the mother of the gods, *qnyt*, progenitress (1.3.v.40, 1.4.i.21–24 and many examples; 87, 91 and notes, 83); the luminary of the gods, the burning one, the strength of the heavens (1.3.v.15, 1.4.viii.21; 85, 113); Athirat and her sons, the goddess and the band of her kinsmen (1.3.v.35; 87); the symbol of the great lady was a spindle, held in her right hand (1.4.ii.3–4; 93); the great lady sun (1.16.i.36; 224); the royal heir 'drinks the milk of A[thi]rat' (1.15.ii.25; 209); the stars as the sons of the great lady, the morning and evening stars (1.23 V 53–4; 332). The 'sacred bride', the same word as is translated 'Virgin' in Is 7:14, was a word used only for goddesses and royal ladies (1.24.R.8; 337).

³¹ For Asherah, as the mother of the 70 sons of El, see J. Day, 'Asherah in the Hebrew Bible and North West Semitic literature', *JBL* 105 (1986), 385–408, esp. 387.

³² See Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah*, 39–41.

³³ See, for example, the famous twelfth-century Sinai icon, reproduced in K. Weitzmann, *The Icon. Holy Images – Sixth to Fourteenth Century* (New York, 1978), pl. 27.

³⁴ Kanon of the *Akathistos*, Ode 6, Troparion: 'See, to you we cry "Hail!" Be our haven as we toss upon the deep...' trans. Archimandrite Ephrem Lash at <http://www.anastasis.org.uk/akathist.htm>

Proverbs 8 has another Wisdom poem, about her role in creation. She was born³⁵ before the visible world was made; in other words, she was born in the holy of holies, and was the first of the 'ways' of the Lord. She was beside the Creator as the visible world was planned and brought into being. She was the one who held all things together in harmony (Prov 8:30). She played before the Creator in his inhabited world, and brought him great delight (Prov 8:22–31). Wisdom invited people to her table, to share her bread and wine (Prov 9:5), a link to the refugees in Egypt who remembered the bread, wine and incense of the queen of heaven.

In the *Protevangelion*, the child Mary dances in the temple, like Wisdom playing before the creator.³⁶

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

Initiate of an ineffable counsel (Ikos 2)
 Beginning of Christ's wonders (Ikos 2)
 [The One who surpasses] the knowledge of the wise (Ikos 2)
 [The One who brings] opposites to harmony (Ikos 8)

The Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira,³⁷ written around 200 BC in Jerusalem, contains similar imagery. Wisdom speaks among the heavenly host,³⁸ and has her throne in a pillar of cloud. She serves in the tabernacle (that is, she is a high priest) and compares herself to a great tree rooted in Jerusalem – a cedar, a cypress, a palm, a rose, an olive and a plane. She is also the perfume of the incense and the anointing oil. She invites her disciples to eat and drink her, and then compares herself and her teaching to water, flowing out in an ever-growing stream (Sir 24: 1–34).

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

Wonder well-known among the angels (Ikos 2)
 Acceptable incense of intercession (Ikos 3)
 Pillar of fire (Ikos 6)
 Food that replaced the manna (Ikos 6)
 Scent of Christ's fragrance (Ikos 11)
 Life of mystical feasting (Ikos 11)

In the Kanon of the *Akathist* she is addressed as:

[The one] from whom there sprung the unfading rose (Ode 1, Troparion)
 Fragrant incense and myrrh of great price (Ode 1, Troparion)

³⁵ The Hebrew text here has two words to describe birth, not creation: *qnh*, 'beget', used in the title for God Most High in Gen 14:19, and *hll*, which means 'to bring forth' or 'to give birth'.

³⁶ *Protevangelion* 7, trans. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 60.

³⁷ Also known as *Ecclesiasticus*: see B.M. Metzger and R.E. Murphy, eds, *The New Oxford Annotated Apocrypha. The Apocryphal/ Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1991), 86–160.

³⁸ Cf. 1 En 42:2, where Wisdom returns to her place among the angels having been rejected on earth.

Living and ungrudging source (Ode 3, Irmos)
 Never failing spring of the living water (Ode 3, Troparion)
 Pillar of fire (Ode 9, Troparion)

Wisdom as water is an important image. The holy of holies described in Enoch's visions was a place of flowing water – fountains of wisdom for the thirsty (1 En 48:1) – where wisdom is poured out like water (1 En 49:1), and the tree of life in Revelation 22 was watered by the river of life. Ezekiel saw the river of life flowing from the restored temple (Ezek 47:1–12). The text of ben Sira 24 exists in many forms, but the additional material in the Vulgate is interesting: Wisdom is the firstborn before all creation (Sir 24:5; perhaps an addition from Prov 8), and she walks in the waves of the sea, in *fluctibus maris ambulavi* (Vulgate *Ecclesiasticus* 24:8), a direct link to the lady of Ugarit who 'trampled the sea'.

The Wisdom of Solomon, another late text, says that she is radiant and unfading (Wis 6:12), 'the radiance of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness' (Wis 7:26). Solomon had sought her as a bride (Wis 9:2), and she gave him immortality (Wis 8:13). Wisdom sat by the throne of the Lord in heaven (Wis 9:10) and was known as the Holy Spirit (Wis 9:17). Israel, which in the Bible is guided and protected throughout history by the Lord is guided by Wisdom. Wisdom watched over Noah, strengthened Abraham, guided Jacob and led Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea. She was their shelter by day in the desert and their pillar of fire by night (Wis 10:17). Elsewhere, the pillar of fire is described as 'the cloud overshadowing the camp' (Wis 19:7).

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

[The One] through whom joy will shine out (Ikos 1)
 Radiance of the mystical day (Ikos 5)
 Sea that drowned the Pharaoh of the mind (Ikos 6)
 Rock that gave drink to those thirsting for life (Ikos 6)
 Pillar of fire guiding those in darkness (Ikos 6)
 Protection of the world wider than the cloud (Ikos 6)
 [The One who makes] the enlightenment with many lights to dawn
 (Ikos 11)

In the Kanon of the *Akathist* she is addressed as:

Radiant dawn (Ode 3, Troparion)
 Our enlightenment (Ode 9, Troparion)

Some of Philo's Wisdom imagery has no obvious root in the Greek scriptures. He knew of a divine couple who were parents of the king,³⁹ that God was the husband of Wisdom,⁴⁰ that the Logos was the son of Wisdom his mother,

³⁹ Philo, *On Drunkenness* VIII.30, F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, eds, *Philo* (10 vols, London and New York, 1930), vol. 3, 332–4.

⁴⁰ Philo, *Cherubim* XIV.49, Colson and Whitaker, *Philo*, vol. 2, 36.

through whom (fem.) the universe came into being.⁴¹ Wisdom was the 'first born mother of all things'.⁴² Philo must have known the older cult – that Wisdom was the mother of Yahweh the king.

There are several places in the texts where Wisdom has been obscured. The Great lady of Ugarit was the sun, and in Hebrew the noun sun, *shemesh* can be either masculine or feminine. In Malachi 4:2, it is feminine, and so the Hebrew says: 'The sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in *her* wings.' 'Sun' becomes masculine in the Greek and Latin translations, giving the familiar 'shall rise with healing in his wings'. Thus the lady vanished. The original text referred to a female figure. Since the Hebrew noun 'sun' could have had a masculine form, this must have been an intended reference to a female figure.

Ezekiel saw the lady leaving the temple. His visions of the chariot throne are almost beyond translating, not least because some words do not appear elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.⁴³ There is a mixture of masculine and feminine, singular and plural, and then attempts to describe rings of light and fiery creatures. Since Ezekiel was a first temple priest (Ezek 1:3), this description of the throne was the holy of holies as he knew it. We should expect to find the lady in one of her forms, and she is there – as the throne itself. Seated on the throne was a fiery human form (Ezek 1:26–8), 'the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.' The 'living creatures' which Ezekiel struggled to depict are more often described with a singular than a plural form of the nouns and verbs. Was he seeing a single figure or several? In the vision of the throne by the river Chebar, he says that the spirit of the living one (singular) was in the rings of light (Ezek 1:20), and this singular form occurs three times (vv. 21, 22). The living one was beneath the firmament of 'awful ice' (Ezek 1:22, translating literally); she supported the throne. In the vision of the throne leaving the temple, the living one (singular) is also mentioned three times (Ezek 10:15, 17, 20), and identified as the cherubim.⁴⁴ Ezekiel heard the sound of the throne – the sound of many waters, like thunder, the voice of Shaddai (Ezek 1:24).

Ezekiel saw the throne approaching as 'a great cloud with brightness round about it' (Ezek 1:4), just as king David had described the Lord coming to help him, carried by a thick bright cloud (2 Sam 22:12–13; Ps 18:11–12 [17:12–13]). The cloud covered the tabernacle when the glory of the Lord came into it (Ex 40:34), and a cloud filled the temple when the glory of the Lord came into the temple (1 Kings 8:10–11; 2 Chron 5:13–14). Ezekiel saw the glory leave, as a bright cloud rising from the temple court (Ezek 10:3–4). The cloud invariably accompanied the Lord when he came to his people: on Sinai (Ex 19:9), over the ark in the holy of holies (Lev 16:2), over the tabernacle

⁴¹ Philo, *Flight* XX.109, Colson and Whitaker, *Philo*, vol. 5, 68.

⁴² Philo, *Questions on Genesis* IV.97, trans. R. Marcus, *Philo, Questions and Answers on Genesis*, Supplement I (Cambridge MA, 1953), 381.

⁴³ *Bzq*, 'flash of lightning' (Ezek 1:14) is unique; *qll*, 'burnished' (Ezek 1:7) only occurs in Dan 10:6, a comparable vision.

⁴⁴ The instances of the plural can be explained as plurals of majesty, often used for divinities; 'God' in Hebrew is a plural form, and, as we have seen, Wisdom also occurs as a plural form.

when the Israelites were in the desert (Num 9:15–23), at the door of the tent (Deut 31:15). Isaiah prophesied a cloud by day and fire by night, as a refuge and shelter from Zion (Is 4:5). Some bitter wordplay in Isaiah (a characteristic of this prophet) suggests that this cloud represented a ‘motherly’ presence. When he condemned the unfaithful people of Jerusalem, accusing them of being the children of an adulterer and a harlot – imagery often used for the second temple and restored city – he also accused them of being the children of a sorceress. In Hebrew, that is written in the same way as ‘cloud’ [*nmh*].⁴⁵ At the Transfiguration, a bright cloud overshadowed Jesus and a voice said, ‘This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased’ (Mt 17:5; Mk 9:7; Lk 9:34). These were the words that Jesus heard at his baptism, which some early Christians remembered as the words of his mother.⁴⁶

In the Kanon of the *Akathist*, Mary is addressed as:

All-bright cloud that unceasingly overshadows the faithful (Ode 6, Troparion)

And Jesus is described as the one who has come on a cloud of light.

On his spirit journey to Jerusalem, Ezekiel saw in the temple ‘the seat of the image of jealousy which provokes to jealousy’ (Ezek 8:3). Words that sound exactly the same mean ‘the image of the woman who creates’, the title of the great lady of Ugarit, *qnyt*.⁴⁷ This is another example of editors obscuring something that they deemed unmentionable. Ezekiel also described how an anointed angel high priest had been thrown from Eden, because *she* had abused her wisdom. Her sanctuary had been burned (Ezek 28:12–19). The present text says that she was the ruler of Tyre, which can look very similar to Zion in Hebrew script.

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

A throne for the king (Ikos 1)
All-holy chariot of him who rides upon the cherubim (Ikos 8)

In the Kanon of the *Akathist* she is addressed as:

Fiery throne of the Almighty (Ode 1, Troparion)
Fiery chariot of the Word (Ode 5, Troparion)
Chariot of the spiritual sun (Ode 7, Troparion)

There are several places where the lady can be found beneath the Hebrew text. When the Lord came from Sinai with his host of holy ones (Deut 33:2), there was an ‘uncertain word’ at his right hand. The uncertain word had been the

⁴⁵ Although pointed, i.e. pronounced, differently: ‘*on^enah* = sorceress, and ‘*anah*, cloud.

⁴⁶ See n. 16 above.

⁴⁷ MT *sml hqh’h*, image of jealousy, was formerly *sml hqnh*, (without the aleph) the image of the woman who creates, the consort of El qnh, the God of Melchizedek (Gen 14:19). See Barker, *The Great Angel*, 54.

name of the lady, but, 'r' and 'd' look very similar in Hebrew, and Ashrata has become *esh dat*, 'flaming fire'. The lady has vanished. There is similar obscurity at the end of Isaiah's temple vision. The lady had been removed in an earlier temple purge and the people would be punished with what they had chosen: lack of Wisdom. There would be no understanding, no perception, until the deserted one was great in the midst of the land – a possible reading of Isaiah 6:12. An impossible confusion follows, about tenths and a tree stump and the holy seed. Now 'siryah, 'a tenth', looks very like the name of the lady, and so the original was probably about the lady, who, though her tree had been felled, still kept the holy seed.⁴⁸

Ezekiel described her expulsion as the uprooting of the royal vine. The mother of the princes of Israel had been like a fruitful vine, with its strongest stem the sceptre of the ruler, but she had been uprooted and taken to the desert. Her strong stem had withered (Ezek 19:10–14).

In the *Akathistos Hymn* Mary is addressed as:

Vine with a branch that does not wither (Ikos 3)

In the Kanon of the *Akathist* she is addressed as:

True vine that has produced the ripe cluster of grapes (Ode 7, Troparion)

The lady was the tree of life, and the story of Genesis begins with Adam and Eve rejecting the tree of life, which had been their intended food, and opting instead for the forbidden tree. The human pair had been deceived into losing their glorious state, and they discovered that they had chosen for themselves a life of dust. Leaving Eden was remembered as losing the temple and so, rejecting the tree of life is yet another possible reference to the rejection of the lady at that time. The perfumed anointing oil was drawn from the tree, transforming humans into angels and making them wise;⁴⁹ that is why the oil disappeared at this time. The tree itself was remembered in later texts as fiery – gold and crimson – with a wonderful perfume. It stood by the throne of God (2 En 8:3–4; *Life of Adam and Eve* [Greek text], 22:4)⁵⁰ just as the tree of life stood by the throne in St John's vision (Rev 22:1–2). Enoch saw it on one of his heavenly journeys, the fragrant tree that never withered or faded. After the great judgement, it would be transplanted to the temple, and its fruit given as food to the chosen ones (1 En 24:4 – 25:5. The reference to the Eucharist is clear). We recognise it as the menorah, described in Exodus (Ex 25:1–9) as a tree-like object.

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

Food that replaced the manna (Ikos 6)

⁴⁸ See Barker, *The Great High Priest*, 238–40.

⁴⁹ See Barker, *The Great High Priest*, 129–36.

⁵⁰ English translation in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, 249–95.

Tree of glorious fruit from which believers are nourished (Ikos 7)
A lamp that bears the light (Ikos 11)

In the Kanon of the *Akathist* she is addressed as 'lampstand' (Ode 4, Troparion) and as the one who gave back to human beings the robe of incorruption that they had lost through deception (Ode 8, Troparion).

The menorah was shaped like an almond tree (Ex 25:31–9), and the almond had an important place in temple symbolism. Jeremiah saw a blossoming almond rod that reminded him of the watching presence of the Lord (Jer 1:11–12). The rod of the true priesthood was the one that bore blossom and almonds (Num 17:1–11). The high priest wore on his crown a golden blossom⁵¹ engraved with the sacred name (Ex 28:36), most likely an almond flower. The original name for Bethel had been Luz, meaning 'the almond tree' (Gen 28:19). This was the site of Jacob's dream, where he saw the ladder between earth and heaven, and the Lord upon it. He declared that it was the gate of heaven. This was understood as a vision granted by Wisdom, who showed Jacob the Kingdom of God and taught him about angels (Wis 10:10).

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

Heavenly ladder by which God came down (Ikos 2)
Precious diadem of Orthodox kings (Ikos 12)

In the Kanon of the *Akathist* she is addressed as:

Only gate through which the Word alone has passed (Ode 3, Troparion)
Ladder raising all from earth by grace (Ode 4, Troparion)
[The one who] wove for the world a crown not woven by human hand
(Ode 4, Troparion)
Mystical staff that blossomed with the unfading flower (Ode 7,
Troparion)

The feasts of Mary are also marked by the making of almond cakes,⁵² and the botanical name for the almond, 'amygdala', is clearly a Greek form derived from the Semitic 'em g^cdolah, the 'great mother'.

The menorah also symbolised the burning bush. Scholars have long recognised that the story of the burning bush joins the sagas of the patriarchs and of Moses. This was not just a tale from ancient times; it also described how, in the time of Josiah, the emphasis on Moses superseded the older ways of the patriarchs. The story of the burning bush encoded the great purge. The voice from the bush told Moses that in future the God of the patriarchs would be called Yahweh, the Lord (Ex 3:15). Later, the Lord explained that the patriarchs had called their God 'El Shaddai' (Ex 6:3), a name which means 'the God with breasts'. The title is usually translated 'God Almighty'. It will be recalled that the pillar figurines had huge eyes and prominent breasts, and that Ezekiel had heard the voice of Shaddai, sounding like many waters, when

⁵¹ *şiş*, flower, is usually translated 'plate', and so the significance is lost.

⁵² R. Salaman, *The Cooking of Greece and Turkey* (London, 1987), 86.

the throne left the temple. El Shaddai had bestowed fertility, and she appears in an ancient blessing: 'the best gifts of the earth and its fullness ... the favour of the one who dwells in the bush...' (Deut 33:16).⁵³ After the return from exile, when the people were listed by families, by far the largest number were the children of Sena'ah [*s'na'ah*] an otherwise unknown name, but almost the same as the word 'bush', *s'neh* (Ezra 2:35; Neh 7:39). These were the devotees of the lady, but in translation the lady has, once again, vanished.

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

[The one who husbands] the husbandman who loves humankind (Ikos 3)
 [The one who cultivates] the cultivator of our life (Ikos 3)
 Plough-land yielding a rich harvest of compassion (Ikos 3)

In the Kanon of the *Akathist*, she is addressed as:

Bush unburned (Ode 6, Troparion)

Finally and briefly, the lady was the genius of Jerusalem. Throughout the Old Testament there are references to the daughter of Zion, the daughter of Jerusalem. The virgin daughter of Zion scorned the Assyrians when they threatened her city (Is 37:21). Her temple was the tower of the flock on the hill of the daughter of Zion, and Micah prophesied that dominion and power would return to her (Mic 4:8). The abandoned city/queen was vividly described by Isaiah who said her restoration as a jewelled city would be a sign that the covenant of peace stood firm (Is 54:10–13). 'Arise and sit (on your throne) Jerusalem', he said (Is 52:2, translating the Hebrew literally). The city/queen was 'a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord' (Is 62:3). 'Ezra', who wrote around AD 100, had a vision of a mourning woman who was transformed into a dazzling city, that is, Jerusalem. (2 Esdras 9:38 – 10:59). He also saw the Son of God Most High upon a great mountain not made with hands, which he understood to be Zion (2 Esdras 13:36). Hermas, the early Christian prophet in Rome, had visions of a lady who was also the tower that represented the Church. She read the teachings of Wisdom to him from a little book (Hermas, Vision 1:2).⁵⁴ In another vision, he escaped from Leviathan, and then met the lady again, dressed in white (Hermas, Vision 4).

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, Mary is addressed as:

Precious diadem of Orthodox kings (Ikos 12)
 Unshakeable tower of the Church (Ikos 12)
 Unbreachable wall of the kingdom (Ikos 12)

In the Kanon of the *Akathist* she is addressed as:

⁵³ Not, as in many translations, 'him that dwelt in the bush'. The form here is an archaic feminine form of *skn*, 'dwell', whence Shekinah. See Barker, *The Great High Priest*, 246.

⁵⁴ K. Lake, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers* (2 vols, Cambridge MA, 1970), vol. 2, 6–305.

Guardian of all, fortress and stronghold and sacred refuge (Ode 4, Troparion)
 City of the king of all (Ode 5, Troparion)
 Mountain not cut by human hand (Ode 5, Troparion)
 All-blessed, protection and defence, rampart and stronghold (Ode 8, Troparion)

In the book of Revelation, the woman clothed with the sun appears again in the temple, about to give birth to the Messiah. She comes down from heaven as the jewelled heavenly city, as the bride in her garments of fine linen. One of the most remarkable parallels in this reconstruction of the Wisdom tradition is that the heavenly city is described in the same way as Wisdom in the Wisdom of Solomon: both have the radiance of the glory of God, for example, both extend a vast distance, both give eternal life and the kingdom, both are a reflection of eternal light (Wis 6:12 – 7:18 and Rev 20 – 22).⁵⁵

The symbols of the woman dressed in the sun, that is, the tree of life and the river of life, are restored to the holy of holies, and faithful Christians are promised access to the tree and its fruit (Rev 2:7; 22:14). She appears also as the Holy Spirit. Just as 'God-and-the-lamb' are one (e.g. Rev 22:3, 'the throne of God-and-the-lamb shall be in it and they shall worship *him*'), so too the Spirit-and-the-bride, who invite the thirsty to drink the water of life, are the lady restored to the temple where her son is enthroned.

Jewish tradition remembered several things missing from the second temple that would be restored in the temple of the Messiah: the menorah, the ark, the Spirit, the Fire and the cherubim (Numbers Rabbah XV.10); the anointing oil, the manna and the high priestly staff (Babylonian Talmud Horayoth 12a). All of these missing items were aspects of the lady Wisdom and appear as titles of Mary.

In the *Akathistos Hymn* she is addressed as:

All-holy chariot of him who rides upon the cherubim (Ikos 8) [thus, the cherubim are restored]
 Scent of Christ's fragrance (Ikos 11) [the anointing oil is restored]
 Ark gilded by the Spirit (Ikos 12) [the ark is restored]

In the Kanon of the *Akathist* she is addressed as:

Fragrant incense and myrrh [oil] of great price (Ode 1, Troparion)
 Mercy seat (Ode 3, Troparion) [above the ark; thus, the ark is restored]
 Lampstand (Ode 4, Troparion); [the menorah is restored]
 Vessel bearing the manna (Ode 4, Troparion) [the manna is restored]
 Mystical staff that blossomed ... (Ode 7, Troparion) [the high-priestly staff is restored]
 Pillar of fire (Ode 9, Troparion) [the fire is restored]
 Ever-virgin ... dove (Ode 9, Troparion) [the Spirit is restored]

⁵⁵ For detail see Barker, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 320–2.

What might this evidence indicate? There are too many correspondences for it to be coincidence, and so we suggest that Mary was seen as Wisdom, the queen of heaven, the mother of the Lord. This would explain the *Protevangelion of James*, where Mary is presented as Wisdom, fed by angels, dancing before the Lord (in other words, the high priest who represented the Lord). Like the woman clothed with the sun in St John's vision, she emerged from the temple to give birth to her son.

The range of imagery is great, and all drawn from the Wisdom tradition, but some has been given a new meaning or context. Thus the dew that had originally been the anointing oil from the tree of life, the sacrament of *theosis*, became the dew on Gideon's fleece. The burning bush became the symbol of one who was not consumed by the glory within her. Christ became the sun, when originally the lady had been the sun. Christ became the Tree of Life, when originally this had been the symbol of the mother. This suggests that by the time the *Akathistos Hymn* was composed, some of the original significance of the titles had been lost; in other words, the *Hymn* represents a long established tradition. The book of Revelation shows that this tradition was as early as the Church itself, and the *Protevangelion* shows it being set out in narrative form.

Justinian built a great church in Jerusalem, dedicated to the Mother of God.⁵⁶ Such detail as survives shows that it was intended as a new temple. It could well have been built to house the newly recovered temple treasures, brought back from Carthage. The New Church was consecrated on 20 November 543, a date now commemorated on 21 November as the feast of the Entry of the Mother of God into the temple.

Conclusion

If the initial estimates of the date are correct, a remarkable icon from about this time also shows Mary as Wisdom (Plate 6.1).⁵⁷ She is depicted holding, to her left, what could be a glass mirror, in which is reflected the child. One explanation of this image would be that Mary is Wisdom, 'a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness' (Wis 7:26). When Ezekiel saw the throne of the Lord, in other words, the lady, she was supporting a shining crystal, over which was seated a human figure, 'the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord' (Ezek 1:22–8). A combination of these two would account for this rather strange representation of Mary apparently reflecting the child in a mirror. She is Wisdom, reflecting the glory of God.

⁵⁶ See M. Barker, 'The new church', *Sourozh* 103 (February 2006), 15–33.

⁵⁷ An icon acquired by Richard Temple, presently in the Temple Gallery in London. Cover illustration of catalogue for the Temple Gallery Exhibition, *Masterpieces of Early Christian Art and Icons*, 15th June – 30th July 2005 (London, 2005).

Epithets of the Theotokos in the *Akathistos Hymn*

Leena Mari Peltomaa

The anonymous *Akathistos* of 24 strophes is the famous Byzantine Incarnation hymn in praise of Mary.¹ It is by far the most studied piece of Byzantine hymnography, but as my study, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn*,² provides the only complete analysis of the hymn's contents, thereby considering, strophe for strophe, all the Marian epithets, the frame of reference in this chapter is restricted to it.

The *Akathistos* is classified into the genre of *kontakion*, but it is atypical because it contains series of salutations or acclamations (beginning with *χαῖρε*) addressed to Mary as the Theotokos, that is, 'the one who gives birth to God'.³ These salutations are considered an allusion to the victory the defenders of the term 'Theotokos' gained over the Nestorian heresy in the Christological controversy at the council of Ephesos in 431.⁴ Indeed, the great number of the *χαῖρε* lines (144 different epithets and 12 refrains) and their organisation (the series of 12 phrases in the 12 odd strophes) justify the notion that they manifest the sentiment of a triumph, for it was an ancient Roman tradition that emperors were saluted for their victories by such acclamations, with their characteristics being praised by means of epithets.⁵

¹ The Greek text edition by C.A. Trypanis, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*, Wiener byzantinistische Studien 5 (Vienna, 1968), 17–39, was prepared according to modern critical standards, but 'cannot be considered as satisfactory': see G. Papagiannis, *AKATHISTOS YMNOΣ, άγνωστες πτυχές ενός πολύ γνωστού κειμένου. Κριτικές και μετρικές παρατηρήσεις σχολιασμένη βιβλιογραφία* (Thessalonike, 2006), 303. However, the study of Papagiannis does not prove Trypanis's edition to be unreliable; see the review by L.M. Peltomaa, *JÖB* 58 (2008), 265–6.

² L.M. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn*, The Medieval Mediterranean 35 (Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 2001). On the state of the research, see 40–8.

³ On the question of the genre, see Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 40–2.

⁴ Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 36–9.

⁵ Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 67; consult e.g., 'Akklamation' in RAC I and 'Minutes of the Senate', with the records of the acclamations shouted by the assembly to the 'greatest of the Augustuses' in Th. Mommsen, ed., *Codex Theodosianus*

The *Akathistos* is considered a masterpiece of rhetoric.⁶ Stylistically, it comes closest to the high rhetoric found in the homilies of Proklos of Constantinople (d. 446), the famous preacher and opponent of Nestorios.⁷ A great part of the salutation verses consists of figures of speech which in classical rhetoric formed one type of the tropes, the metaphor. In Byzantine rhetoric, metaphor was considered especially appropriate for the declaration of divine truths. The thorough analysis of the *Akathistos's* epithets shows that it would be a great error to consider them as 'decorations'. The poetic language of the *Akathistos* is in logical relationship to the context in which it appears: every single metaphor has cognitive or intellectual significance in the narrative context, the story of the Incarnation of God the Logos.⁸

In the *Akathistos Hymn*, the Incarnation is depicted following the early Christian pattern of thought, wherein the Incarnation signifies redemption from the Fall and its consequent effects. According to this concept, Mary is the second Eve by whose obedience the 'correction process' of the Fall is put into effect. The Christological claims, the dogma of the Theotokos most emphatically, and soteriological conceptions of the period are accommodated to this depiction.⁹ It is also obvious that in the *Akathistos*, Mary as the birth-giver of God represents the ideal that Gregory of Nyssa portrays in his treatise, *De virginitate*, for those who strive for perfection through virginity.¹⁰ It can be stated that the hymn is internally consistent and progresses logically from beginning to end. What is related about Mary yields the image of the Virgin, which reflects her extraordinary status in the given frame of reference. Consequently, the image remains distant and impersonal.

The image is made up of different kind of epithets. There are the dogmatic terms, 'Theotokos' and 'Virgin', established types or Old Testament prefigurations, for example, 'tabernacle of God and the Logos',¹¹ and occasional epithets arising from the close context, such as 'guide of the Persians to temperance'.¹² The theological implication of these epithets differs from one to another. As was already pointed out, the narrative of the hymn motivates every expression about Mary. It is, however, important to take into

1.2: *Theodosiani libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis* (Berlin, 1905); trans. C. Pharr et al., *The Theodosian Code and the Sirmondian Constitution* (Princeton NJ, 1952), cols 5–6.

⁶ See Trypanis, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*, 25; A. Filonov Gove, *The Slavic Akathistos Hymn: Poetic Elements of the Byzantine Text and the Old Church Slavonic Translation*, Slavistische Beiträge 224 (Munich, 1988), 22–6, 29–41.

⁷ Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 111.

⁸ Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 115–25.

⁹ Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 35–6.

¹⁰ CPG 3165; ed. and trans. M. Aubineau, *Grégoire de Nysse, Traité de la virginité*, SC 119 (Paris, 1966).

¹¹ *Akathistos Hymn* 23.6: χαῖρε, σκηνὴ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Λόγος.

¹² *Akathistos Hymn* 9.16: χαῖρε, Περσῶν ὁδηγὲ σωφοσύνης. A close context is formed by what is narrated immediately before or after an epithet, or in the strophe or in the scene in which the epithet appears, e.g., the Annunciation in four or the Magi in three strophes form also a close context; see, for example, Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 118 and 124.

consideration that the praise of Mary implicit in the narrative is articulated not only by words, but also by rhetorical means. To emphasise Mary's position as the Theotokos, the author uses conventional rhetorical practice in placing the most important issues at the beginning, middle and end of the composition, in this case in strophes 1, 15 and 23. It becomes clear that the epithets of these three strophes present what was considered the essence of the subject 'Theotokos' in relation to the nature of Christ, according to the Orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation after the council of Ephesos. I will therefore focus on these three strophes first.

The *Akathistos* begins with the scene of the Annunciation. It is striking that, while the evangelists call Mary 'parthenos', the *Akathistos* says that the angel was sent to the 'Theotokos'. It is also striking that the angel is said to have seen that the Lord was 'taking a body':¹³ this is the moment when the Incarnation physically took place in Mary's womb. Amongst the salutations of the first strophe there is one epithet which undoubtedly originates in typological thinking: 'Hail, since you are the chair of the king'.¹⁴ The word 'chair' (καθέδρα), like 'throne' (θρόνος), appears as a symbol of power in the Old Testament.¹⁵ Luke, for instance, uses it in the angelic message, where it explicitly refers to the throne of the king David.¹⁶ Hesychios (d. after 450) relates that Mary was called καθέδρα, 'the chair, no less than the cherubic chair'.¹⁷ The cherubic chair was the cover of the ark of the covenant, the so-called 'mercy-seat' (ἰλαστήριον), which was overshadowed by the wings of two cherubim. That was the place where God spoke to Moses.¹⁸ So, Mary's epithet, 'chair of the king', seems to connote the Old Testament meanings of the cherubic chair and the throne of David, but in this passage the point being emphasised is the physical relationship between Christ and the one who gives birth to him. Other epithets in the same context reveal the same analogy, for instance, 'Hail, since you bear him who bears all things',¹⁹ and especially, 'Hail, womb of the divine Incarnation.'²⁰

Strophe 15 presents the manner of the Incarnation, whose subject is the uncircumscribed Logos.²¹ In this strophe the explicit use of the word 'Theotokos' is avoided. However, although the word is not mentioned, the concept is present – most emphatically – in the first salutation. Like a creed,

¹³ *Akathistos Hymn* 1.4: σωματούμενόν σε θεωρῶν.

¹⁴ *Akathistos Hymn* 1.12: χαίρε, ὅτι ὑπάρχεις βασιλέως καθέδρα.

¹⁵ E.g., Sir 7:4.

¹⁶ Lk 1:32.

¹⁷ Hesychios of Jerusalem, *Homily* 5, PG 93, col. 1461A.

¹⁸ Ex 25:17–22.

¹⁹ *Akathistos Hymn* 1.12: χαίρε, ὅτι βαστάζεις τὸν βαστάζοντα πάντα.

²⁰ *Akathistos Hymn* 1.15: χαίρε, γαστήρ ἐνθέου σαρκώσεως.

²¹ *Akathistos Hymn* 15.1–4: Ὅλος ἦν ἐν τοῖς κάτω καὶ τῶν ἄνω οὐδ' ὄλως/ ἀπὴν ὁ ἀπερίγραπτος Λόγος/ συγκατάβασις γὰρ θεϊκῆ,/ οὐ μετάβασις δὲ τοπικῆ γέγονε/ καὶ τόκος ἐκ παρθένου θεολήπτου. (The uncircumscribed Word was present wholly among those below, / yet in no way absent from those above, / for a divine condescension occurred / not a descent according to place / and a birth from the Virgin, seized by God.)

the hymn states that the birth of the Logos occurred from the Virgin.²² Then follows the salutation, 'Χαίρε, θεοῦ ἀχωρήτου χώρα'.²³ This paradox, the *χώρα ἀχωρήτου*, literally the 'container of the uncontainable' or the 'space of the infinite', is significant. It characterises the Christological homilies of the opponents of Nestorios in the Ephesian period, for it is systematically used as a paraphrasis for the Theotokos.²⁴ In his homily, which made the Theotokos schism a public affair in December 428,²⁵ Proklos asks: 'Who ever saw, who ever heard of God in his infinity dwelling in a womb? Heaven cannot contain him, yet a womb did not constrict him.'²⁶ Obviously, the *θεοῦ ἀχωρήτου χώρα* appears for the same reason in the *Akathistos*, representing the touchstone of Orthodox belief, as we hear: 'Hail, tidings doubted by unbelievers' and 'Hail, undoubted boast of believers.'²⁷ These expressions (*ἀμφίβολον ἄκουσμα, ἀναμφίβολον καύχημα*) are followed by the epithets, 'the all-holy chariot of him who is above the cherubim' and the 'excellent dwelling-place for him who is above the seraphim'.²⁸ Such a sequence proves that the topic under discussion relates to Mary's exalted position as the bearer of God.

Strophe 23, the penultimate strophe of the hymn, states that the Lord dwelt in the womb of the Theotokos. She is praised as a living temple and the Lord himself authorises the salutations. The weightiest arguments from the Old Testament are presented: 'Hail, tabernacle of God and the Logos; Hail, greater than the holy of holies; Hail, ark gilded by the Spirit'.²⁹ In typological interpretation, the epithets 'tabernacle', 'holy of holies' and 'ark' (*σκηνή, ἅγια ἁγίων, κιβωτός*), as referring to the place which, according to Exodus, was sanctified for the Lord, constitute a testimony to Mary as a place of God.³⁰ Her official status as the Theotokos is stated in four salutations: 'Hail, precious diadem of pious kings; Hail, holy exaltation of devout priests; Hail,

²² The *ἐκ παρθένου* in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed of 381: *σαρκωθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου* (ACO II.12.80).

²³ *Akathistos Hymn* 15.6.

²⁴ Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 70; see also L.M. Peltomaa, 'The Akathistos Hymn and the Mariology of the council of Ephesus', M.F. Wiles and E.J. Yarnold, eds, *Papers Presented to the Thirteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Studia Patristica* 35 (Leuven, 2001), 304–8.

²⁵ On the dating, see L.M. Peltomaa, 'Die berühmteste Marien-Predigt der Spätantike. Zur choronologischen und mariologischen Einordnung der Predigt des Proklos. Mit einem Anhang von Johannes Koder: Übersetzung der Marien-Predigt', *JÖB* 54 (2004), 77–96.

²⁶ PG 65, col. 681B: ACO I.1.1.103.22–3: *Τίς εἶδεν, τίς ἤκουσεν ὅτι μήτραν ὁ θεὸς ἀπεριγράπτως ᾤκησεν; ὃν οὐρανὸς οὐκ ἐχώρησεν, γαστήρ οὐκ ἐστενοχώρησεν.*

²⁷ *Akathistos Hymn* 15.8–9: *χαίρε, τῶν ἀπίστων ἀμφίβολον ἄκουσμα/ χαίρε, τῶν πιστῶν ἀναμφίβολον καύχημα.*

²⁸ *Akathistos Hymn* 15.10–11: *χαίρε, ὄχημα πανάγιον τοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν Χερουβίμ/ χαίρε, οἴκημα πανάριστον τοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν Σεραφίμ.*

²⁹ *Akathistos Hymn* 23.6–8: *χαίρε, σκηνή τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Λόγου/ χαίρε, ἅγια ἁγίων μεζῶν/ χαίρε, κιβωτὴ χρυσοθεῖσα τῷ πνεύματι.*

³⁰ These words belong conceptually together but appear frequently disconnected in modern translations, following obviously the Latin rendering, 'Salve, sancta maior omnibus sanctis'; see the review by Peltomaa, *JÖB* 58 (2008), 265–6, esp. 266.

immovable tower of the church; Hail, impregnable wall of the kingdom.³¹ It is quite evident that strophe 23 is a dogmatic proclamation.

So, the significance of the Christological topic 'Theotokos' is emphasised by rhetorical means in three strophes. The whole composition, however, consists of 24 strophes including numerous epithets with no direct connection to the Christological issue. This is due to the fact that the hymn reflects the Christian explanation of world history, which was known in the form that the story of the Incarnation is told by the *Akathistos*, at least two centuries before the controversy over the Theotokos began. It is called the theory of 'recapitulation'. Our main source for this theory is Irenaeus of Lyons' work *Adversus haereses*, where Mary is given the role of the second or new Eve, an idea which is based on the parallel Eve–Mary and not found in the Bible.³² Accordingly, the epithets in the *Akathistos* that trace their origins back to the Irenaean explanation reflect the theory which can be summarised as follows:

When Adam and Eve had fallen in paradise, God, as *Philanthropos*, wanted to redeem humankind from doom and death and to restore it to its original state of glory. The Incarnation of God himself was the redemptive plan of God (*oikonomia*). As to the recapitulating parallel Eve–Mary, Irenaeus states that while Eve's disobedience was the cause of the Fall, Mary's obedience became the cause of salvation. Mary's part as assistant in God's plan started at the moment when she assented to Gabriel's announcement. Her consent became a prerequisite of the Incarnation and its consequences up to the end of time, that is, the Judgement Day and the renewal of the world into the state of the first paradise.³³ The following collection of salutations exemplify the second Eve theme amongst the epithets in the *Akathistos*: 'Hail, through whom the curse shall cease';³⁴ 'Hail, recalling of fallen Adam';³⁵ 'Hail, deliverance of the tears of Eve';³⁶ 'Hail, since you make the meadow of delights blossom again';³⁷ 'Hail, key to the gates of Paradise';³⁸ 'Hail, through whom Hades was stripped bare';³⁹ 'Hail, through whom we were clothed in glory';⁴⁰ 'Hail, you who shine forth the prefiguration of resurrection';⁴¹ 'Hail, conciliation of the righteous judge';⁴² 'Hail, through whom sin is remitted';⁴³ 'Hail, through

³¹ *Akathistos Hymn* 23.10–13: χαῖρε, τίμιον διάδημα βασιλέων εὐσεβῶν/ χαῖρε, καύχημα σεβάσμιον ἱερέων εὐλαβῶν/ χαῖρε, τῆς ἐκκλησίας ὁ ἀσάλευτος πύργος/ χαῖρε, τῆς βασιλείας τὸ ἀπόρθητον τεῖχος.

³² Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* III.22.4; Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 129.

³³ See Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 130–2.

³⁴ *Akathistos Hymn* 1.7: χαῖρε, δι' ἧς ἡ ἀρὰ ἐκλείψει.

³⁵ *Akathistos Hymn* 1.8: χαῖρε, τοῦ πεσόντος Ἀδάμ ἡ ἀνάκλησις.

³⁶ *Akathistos Hymn* 1.9: χαῖρε, τῶν δακρῶν τῆς Εὐας ἡ λύτρωσις.

³⁷ *Akathistos Hymn* 5.12: χαῖρε, ὅτι λειμῶνα τῆς τρυφῆς ἀναθάλλεις.

³⁸ *Akathistos Hymn* 7.9: χαῖρε, παραδείσου θυρῶν ἀνοικτήριον.

³⁹ *Akathistos Hymn* 7.16: χαῖρε, δι' ἧς ἐγυμνώθη ὁ Ἄϊδης.

⁴⁰ *Akathistos Hymn* 7.17: χαῖρε, δι' ἧς ἐνεδύθημεν δόξαν.

⁴¹ *Akathistos Hymn* 13.18: χαῖρε, ἀναστάσεως τύπον ἐκλάμπουσα.

⁴² *Akathistos Hymn* 13.14: χαῖρε, κριτοῦ δικαίου δυσώπησις.

⁴³ *Akathistos Hymn* 15.14: χαῖρε, δι' ἧς ἐλύθη παράβασις.

whom paradise is opened’;⁴⁴ ‘Hail, you who take away the filth of the sin.’⁴⁵ It is clear that the conceptual link to these epithets is not found in Christology. Although the epithet ‘second Eve’ or ‘new Eve’ does not appear in the text in its explicit form, the idea is present in the salutations throughout the hymn. From the viewpoint of doctrinal history, the epithet ‘second Eve’ is anterior to ‘Theotokos’.

We know already that the Incarnation is said to have occurred by means of the Virgin. ‘Virgin’ is the oldest of the Marian epithets and is related to the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 7:14;⁴⁶ however, in the *Akathistos* it has different senses depending on the context. For instance, in strophe 15, Mary has the role of the virgin that the Christian interpreters of Isaiah’s prophecy wish to give her: ‘Hail, you who unite virginity and childbirth.’⁴⁷ Thus this epithet connotes the interpretative tradition, whereas the epithet in strophe 17 has another nuance: ‘Wordy orators are at loss to say how you remained virgin and yet had power to bear a child.’⁴⁸ It is noteworthy that here the issue does not revolve around how a virgin has the power to bear a child, but how a virgin, despite the birth-giving, remains a virgin. This is the thesis concerning the Virgin that Proklos of Constantinople presents as the proof of the birth of God, found explicitly in his homily against Nestorios.⁴⁹ Obviously the word ‘virgin’ in this connection connotes the debate related to the question of Mary’s virginity *post partum*. It is numerically evident, however, that in the *Akathistos* the epithet ‘Virgin’ is strongly associated with ascetic ideology. This emphasis appears already in the refrain, ‘Hail, bride unwedded’ (Χαίρε, νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε), alluding to the way of thought characteristic of early female asceticism, that a virgin is Christ’s bride. As the salutations conclude twelve times with this epithet, the ‘unwedded bride’ leaves its stamp on the whole hymn.

There is no doubt whence the ascetic inspiration comes, for in five strophes (3, 17, 19, 21, 23) there are explicit points of contact, both linguistic and thematic, with Gregory of Nyssa’s treatise *De Virginitate*.⁵⁰ Recently Terttu Haikka has convincingly shown that some aspects, central in Gregory’s *Canticum* and also typical of his earlier texts, are emphasised in the *Akathistos*. This suggests a close ideological connection of the hymn with Gregory.⁵¹ As a comprehensive study of the influence of Gregory’s thinking on the *Akathistos*

⁴⁴ *Akathistos Hymn* 15.15: χαίρε, δι’ ἧς ἠνοίχθη παράδεισος.

⁴⁵ *Akathistos Hymn* 21.13: χαίρε, τῆς ἀμαρτίας ἀναιροῦσα τὸν ῥύπον.

⁴⁶ ἰδὸν ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν.

⁴⁷ *Akathistos Hymn* 15.13: χαίρε, ἡ παρθενίαν καὶ λοχείαν ζευγνύσα.

⁴⁸ *Akathistos Hymn* 17.1–4: Ῥήτορας πολυφθόγγους ὡς ἰχθύας ἀφώνους/ ὀρώμεν ἐπὶ σοί, θεοτόκε/ ἀποροῦσι γὰρ λέγειν τὸ πῶς/ καὶ παρθένος μένεις καὶ τεκεῖν ἴσχυσας.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Homily 1*, ACO I.1.104.3–4 and Proklos’s letter to the Church of Armenia (Tomus, ACO IV.2.192.23–4); see Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 186.

⁵⁰ See Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 191–8; Aubineau, *Grégoire de Nysse, Traité de virginité*.

⁵¹ T. Haikka, ‘Gregory of Nyssa’s *Canticum* behind the *Akathistos* Hymn?’, in M. Vinzent, ed., *Papers presented at the Fifteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Studia Patristica 47* (Leiden, 2010), 63–70.

has not yet been undertaken, let the following characterisation of the ascetic virgin, based on the *De Virginitate*, illustrate her 'Gregorian aspect': she yearns to grasp 'an unknowable knowledge';⁵² she is 'the main chapter of the teachings of Christ';⁵³ she 'surpasses the knowledge of the wise';⁵⁴ she 'reveals lovers of wisdom (that is, philosophers) as unwise';⁵⁵ she 'draws us forth from the depth of ignorance and illuminates many people with knowledge';⁵⁶ she is 'the wall for virgins and for all who flee to her';⁵⁷ she is 'the beginning of spiritual renewal',⁵⁸ 'fair nursing-mother of virgins' and 'bridal escort for holy souls';⁵⁹ she is seen as 'torch full of light';⁶⁰ 'she guides all to divine knowledge and illuminates the mind with brilliance';⁶¹ she is 'the living temple'.⁶² It is also noteworthy that the very last epithets seem to reflect a genuine feeling of attachment to Mary: 'Hail, healing of *my* body'; 'Hail, protection of *my* soul.'⁶³

The *Akathistos* is a composition in praise of Mary. While her dogmatic relevance to the Incarnation is highlighted by rhetorical emphasis, her meaning to the salvation of humanity is mainly 'proved' by means of typology. It is evident that the position of the Theotokos is supported by a few Old Testament types; nevertheless, some epithets bear witness to a typological way of thinking but offer no explicit typological interpretation. Strophe 11 is a special case since, taken as a whole, it presents an allegory of the church. In this strophe the passages of the Exodus which prefigure the Incarnation are accommodated to the epithets of Mary. Accordingly, she is called sea,⁶⁴ rock,⁶⁵ pillar of fire,⁶⁶ protection of the world wider than the cloud,⁶⁷ food, following after manna.⁶⁸ This shift from the established types of the Incarnation to the Marian epithets in the *Akathistos* is also traceable in sources, in particular:

⁵² *Akathistos Hymn* 3.1: γνώσιν ἄγνωστον γνῶναι ἢ παρθένου ζητοῦσα.

⁵³ *Akathistos Hymn* 3.9: χαῖρε, τῶν δογμάτων αὐτοῦ τὸ κεφάλαιον.

⁵⁴ *Akathistos Hymn* 3.16: χαῖρε, σοφῶν ὑπερβαίνουσα γνῶσιν.

⁵⁵ *Akathistos Hymn* 17.8: χαῖρε, φιλοσόφους ἀσόφους δεικνύουσα.

⁵⁶ *Akathistos Hymn* 17.14–15: χαῖρε, βυθοῦ ἀγνοίας ἐξέλκουσα/ χαῖρε, πολλοὺς ἐν γνώσει φωτίζουσα.

⁵⁷ *Akathistos Hymn* 19.1–2: τεῖχος εἶ τῶν παρθένων, θεοτόκε παρθένε,/ καὶ πάντων τῶν εἰς σὲ προσφευγόντων.

⁵⁸ *Akathistos Hymn* 19.8: χαῖρε, ἀρχηγὲ νοητῆς ἀναπλάσεως.

⁵⁹ *Akathistos Hymn* 19.16–17: χαῖρε, καλὴ κουροτρόφε παρθένων/ χαῖρε, ψυχῶν νυμφοστόλε ἀγίων.

⁶⁰ *Akathistos Hymn* 21.1–2: Φωτοδόχον λαμπάδα τοῖς ἐν σκότει φανείσαν/ ὀρώμεν τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον.

⁶¹ *Akathistos Hymn* 21.4–5: ὁδηγεῖ πρὸς γνώσιν θεϊκὴν ἅπαντας,/ αὐγὴ τὸν νοῦν φωτίζουσα.

⁶² *Akathistos Hymn* 23.1–2: Ψάλλοντές σου τὸν τόκον εὐφημοῦμεν σε πάντες/ ὡς ἔμψυχον ναόν, θεοτόκε.

⁶³ *Akathistos Hymn* 23.16–17: χαῖρε, φωτὸς τοῦ ἐμοῦ θεραπεία/ χαῖρε ψυχῆς τῆς ἐμῆς προστασία.

⁶⁴ *Akathistos Hymn* 11.10: χαῖρε, θάλασσα ποντίσασα Φαραῶ τὸν νοητόν.

⁶⁵ *Akathistos Hymn* 11.11: χαῖρε, πέτρα ἢ ποτίσασα τοὺς διψῶντας τὴν ζωὴν.

⁶⁶ *Akathistos Hymn* 11.12: χαῖρε, πύρινη στυλὲ ὁδηγῶν τοὺς ἐν σκότει.

⁶⁷ *Akathistos Hymn* 11.13: χαῖρε, σκέπη τοῦ κόσμου πλατυτέρα νεφέλης.

⁶⁸ *Akathistos Hymn* 11.14: χαῖρε, τροφὴ τοῦ μάννα διάδοχε.

Theodoret of Kyrrhos's *Questiones in Exodus*,⁶⁹ Gregory of Nyssa's *De Vita Moysis*⁷⁰ and Proklos of Constantinople's homily *On the Nativity of Christ*.⁷¹

We do not know who composed the hymn called the *Akathistos* but we can draw up the author's profile: the hymn writer is a great master of rhetoric and uses the same style as Proklos of Constantinople; the *Akathistos*'s author approaches the issue of the Incarnation from the vantage point of Alexandrian theology and employs the same Christological/Mariological arguments as Proklos; the author considers virginity as a means to salvation and accommodates Gregory of Nyssa's *De Virginitate* to the Theotokos. It is clear that, through the series of acclamations, doctrinal emphases, and references to imperial and ecclesiastical authorities, the author communicates the official view of the church and empire in relation to Mary's significance in the Incarnation; the hymn proclaims the dogma of the Theotokos. Thus all salutations to Mary are attributes of the Theotokos. They are all different, each one having a distinctive meaning, dependent on the context in *oikonomia*, the story of the redemptive plan of God. Such is the nature of metaphorical language – and the *Akathistos* is a metaphor throughout – that new, unique, meanings arise where metaphors appear.⁷² It is precisely this phenomenon that dominates the epithets in the *Akathistos* and makes the image of Mary incomparable in freshness.

⁶⁹ CPG 6200: *Quaestiones in Octateuchum; Quaestiones in Exodum*, PG 80.257AB.

⁷⁰ CPG 3159; ed. and trans. J. Daniélou, *Grégoire de Nysse, La Vie de Moïse*, SC 1 (Paris, 3rd edn, 1968), vol. 2, 139–40.

⁷¹ CPG 5822; ed. C. Martin, 'Un florilège grec d'homélie christologiques des IVe et Ve siècles sur la Nativité (Paris gr. 1491)', *Le Muséon* 54 (1941), 44–8; PG 65, cols 841–4 (Latin version); see also Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 167–73.

⁷² On metaphorical language, see Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary*, 116–25, esp. 120–1.

Melkite Syriac Hymns to the Mother of God (9th–11th centuries): Manuscripts, Language and Imagery¹

Natalia Smelova

A few years ago in the Russian National Library in St Petersburg I came across a Syriac manuscript containing a number of hymnographical pieces dedicated to the Virgin Mary. In the catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in Leningrad (the former name of St Petersburg), published in 1960 by Nina V. Pigulevskaya, the content of the manuscript was described as the *Akathistos Hymn*. My research has revised this conclusion and identified the manuscript as a rare collection of the short Melkite hymns to the Virgin called *theotokia* translated from Greek into Syriac.² The collection is divided into eight chapters according to the eight-tone (ὀκτώ ἤχοι) structure of the Byzantine *Octoechos* (Ὀκτώηχος). I have named this remarkable collection of Marian hymns, to which this chapter for the most part is devoted, ‘Syriac *theotokia*’.

I will discuss here the different translations and verbal expressions of the salutations to the Mother of God as they appear in the Greek papyri, Syriac *theotokia* collections, and later Greek and Syriac liturgical books – the latter

¹ This chapter lies within the framework of a wider study of Melkite Syriac hymnography to the Mother of God and is based upon the materials studied in my PhD thesis submitted at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg in 2007. See N.S. Smelova, ‘Syriac Melkite hymnography to the Virgin Mary from the 9th to the 13th century as a source for the history of Oriental Christianity (according to MS Syr. New Series 11 from the Russian National Library)’, (unpubl. PhD thesis, St Petersburg, 2007) (in Russian). I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Mary Cunningham and Prof Leslie Brubaker for their kind attention and encouragement and also to Dr Sebastian Brock (Oxford), Prof Christian Troelsgård (Copenhagen) and to my supervisor Prof Elena Mescherskaya (St Petersburg) for their valuable advice. I would like also to gratefully acknowledge the substantial help of my husband, to whom I dedicate this chapter.

² For a preliminary report on the manuscript see: N. Smelova, ‘Melkite canticles to the Virgin from a Syriac MS in the Russian National Library in the context of Eastern Christian liturgical literature’, in F. Young, M. Edwards and P. Parvis, eds, *Papers Presented at the Fourteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Studia Patristica* 41 (Leuven, 2006), 83–7.

originating from both Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian (Jacobite) milieux in medieval Syria and Palestine.

The *theotokion* (θεοτοκίον, pl. θεοτοκία) appears in the Greek liturgical tradition as a hymn dedicated to the God-bearer (Θεοτόκος), accompanying kanons, *stichera*, *kathismata* (hymns sung during vespers and matins attached to a verse of Psalm or a division of Psalter) and some other hymnographical forms. *Theotokia* can be found in all of the liturgical books that were in constant use from approximately the ninth century, including the *Octoechos*, *Triodion*, *Pentekostarion*, *Menaion*, *Horologion* and so on. The genre of the *theotokion* is in fact much earlier than that, since the most ancient examples are found in the Greek papyri from the fourth century onwards.

Arguably the earliest and certainly one of the most famous Marian hymns, 'Ὑπὸ τὴν σὴν εὐσπλαγχνίαν' is found in the fourth-century (?) papyrus 470 from the John Rylands Library (University of Manchester) as well as in the papyrus P. Vindobon. G 17944, dated to the sixth or seventh century, from the Austrian National Library in Vienna.³ This piece was later adapted to the liturgical use as a *theotokion* of the fifth tone within the *Octoechos*, *Triodion* and *Horologion*.⁴ Besides that, the hymn is very widely used in the Ambrosian rite as a *responsorium*, 'Sub tuum praesidium'; and in the Coptic tradition it is sung during the service to the Virgin Mary.⁵ Its earliest Syriac translation is found in the St Petersburg manuscript of *theotokia* (fol. 9r).

Another well-known Marian hymn, 'Χαίρε Θεοτόκε ἀγαλλίαμα τῶν ἀγγέλων', found on the recto of Greek papyrus 1029 (sixth century) of the British Library, was carefully studied in the 1910s by Anton Baumstark, who identified it as a *theotokion* of the eighth tone attached to a dismissal from the *Horologion*⁶ and also as a hymn belonging to the Coptic daily Marian *akolouthia*, also called *theotokia*.⁷ Three other acrostic Marian strophes accompanied with the refrain

³ C.H. Roberts, *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester* (4 vols, Manchester, 1911–52), vol. 3 (1938): *Theological and Literary texts* (nos. 457–551), 46–7, pl. 1; K. Treu and J.M. Diethart, *Griechische literarische Papyri Christlichen Inhaltes*, *Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, n.s. 2 (Vienna, 1993), 56, pl. 16.

⁴ *Parakletike etoi Oktoechos e Megale* (Rome, 1885), 446; *Triodion Katanyktikon* (Rome, 1879), 112, 133; *Orologion to Mega* (Rome, 1876), 244.

⁵ P.F. Mercenier, 'L'antienne mariale grecque la plus ancienne', *Le Muséon* 52 (1939), 229–33; O. Stegmüller, 'Sub tuum praesidium. Bemerkungen zur ältesten Überlieferung', *Zeitschrift für katolische Theologie* 74 (1952), 76–82; H. Husmann, 'Hymnus und Troparion. Studien zur Geschichte der musikalischen Gattungen von Horologion und Tropologion', *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preussischer Kulturbesitz* (1971), 9–13.

⁶ *Orologion to Mega*, 249. The same *theotokion* can also be found in the *Octoechos* and the *Triodion*.

⁷ A. Baumstark, 'Ein frühchristliches Theotokion in mehrsprachiger Überlieferung und verwandte Texte des ambrosianischen Ritus', *Oriens Christianus*, n.s. 7–8 (1918), 37–61; F.G. Kenyon and H.I. Bell, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum: Catalogue, with Texts* (7 vols, London, 1907), vol. 3, 284. See also P. Maas, 'Ein frühbyzantinische Kirchenlied auf Papyrus', *BZ* 17 (1908), 307–11.

‘σε μεγαλύνομεν’ (‘we magnify you’) were found in the Greek papyrus P. Heid. IV. 1058 (sixth to eighth century) from Heidelberg.⁸

Many other ancient hymns to the Virgin can be found in papyri from the sixth to the eighth century from the Vienna and Berlin collections.⁹ One of the earliest examples of liturgical book (probably a *Tropologion*) indicating tones and containing hymns to the Virgin is represented by fragments of a papyrus codex, P. Vindobon. G 19934 (sixth century), from the Austrian National Library in Vienna.¹⁰

Being products of the early Byzantine hymnography and represented in the earliest liturgical book known as the *Old Tropologion*, these hymns were subsequently identified as a separate category under the name of *theotokia* and became incorporated into the established system of the liturgical books. First of all, the full range of the *theotokia* of eight tones is represented in the book of *Octoechos* containing different hymns for the non-festal Sunday (and later, daily) services, arranged in eight general sections reflecting the division of the ecclesiastical year in eight-week cycles.¹¹ The earliest witness to the formation of the book of *Octoechos* is a late eighth- or early ninth-century three-part Greek parchment manuscript, Sinait. gr. 776 + Sinait. gr. 1593 + Brit Lib. Add. 26113, which contains kanons, *stichera* and *kathismata* of eight tones, accompanied by extensive sets of *theotokia* for every tone.¹² Handwriting in the manuscript suggests its Palestinian origin. The form of the *Octoechos* was changing gradually as it experienced the influence of Palestinian (Sabbaitic) and Constantinopolitan (Stoudite) hymnography. By the tenth or eleventh century, a new form of the *Octoechos*, or *Parakletike*, appeared, as demonstrated by the extensive collection Sinait. gr. 778 (tenth or eleventh century), originating from Constantinople, and by other manuscripts of the same type.¹³ It contains almost the same sets of *theotokia* as the Palestinian *Octoechos*, which means that

⁸ B. Kramer and D. Hagedorn, *Griechische Texte der Heidelberger Papyrus-Sammlung* (Heidelberg, 1986), 34–38, pl. IV. See also P. Maas, S.G. Mercati and S. Gassisi, ‘Gleichzeitige Hymnen in der byzantinischen Liturgie’, *BZ* 18 (1909), 345–6.

⁹ Treu and Diethart, *Griechische literarische Papyri*, 52–6, pls 15–16; P. Sarischouli, *Berliner Griechische Papyri: christliche literarische Texte und Urkunden aus dem 3. bis 8. Jh. n. Chr.* (Wiesbaden, 1995), 48–64, 76–82, pl. 4.

¹⁰ Treu and Diethart, *Griechische literarische Papyri*, 28–51, pls 9–14.

¹¹ A. Cody, ‘The early history of the Octoechos in Syria’, in N.G. Garsoïan, T.F. Mathews and R.W. Thomson, eds, *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington DC, 1982), 89–113.

¹² K.W. Clark, *Checklist of Manuscripts in St. Catherine’s Monastery, Mount Sinai, Microfilmed for the Library of Congress, 1950* (Washington DC, 1952), 10; G. Cavallo, *Ricerche sulla maiuscola biblica*, *Studi e testi di papirologia* 2 (2 vols, Florence, 1967), vol. 1, 120; Husmann, *Hymnus und Troparion*, 33–4; see also descriptions of the manuscript in the following nineteenth-century catalogues: V.E. Gardthausen, *Catalogus codicum graecorum sinaiticorum* (Oxford, 1886), 167; E.A. Bond, E.M. Thompson and G.F. Warner, *Catalogue of Ancient Manuscripts in the British Museum* (2 pts, London, 1881–84), pt. 1: Greek, 23–4; E.A. Bond and E.M. Thompson, *The Palaeographical Society. Facsimiles of Ancient Manuscripts* (second series, 2 pts, London, 1884–94), pt. 1, pl. 4.

¹³ Clark, *Checklist of Manuscripts in St. Catherine’s Monastery*, 10; Gardthausen, *Catalogus Codicum Graecorum*, 167.

their arrangement and introduction into the hymnographical books probably took place in the Greek-speaking religious milieu of Palestine.

At different times after this, the Greek *theotokia* were translated into the various languages of the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian traditions of Eastern Christianity, including Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopian, Slavonic and others, for further liturgical use. One of the first stages in the translation history of the *theotokia* is represented by the St Petersburg collection, Syr. new series 11.

This is not the only manuscript collection of Syriac *theotokia*. Few other rare examples of such a collection may be found in the catalogue of Syriac fragments discovered in 1975 in the Monastery of St Catherine on Mt Sinai, published by Sebastian Brock. There are a few separate bifolia, which Brock dates to between the ninth and eleventh centuries, containing hymns to the Virgin described as *theotokia* (Sinait. syr. Sp. 68, 69, 70).¹⁴ These bifolia either belonged to a different liturgical book or constituted a part of a separate *theotokia* collection similar to that in St Petersburg.

However, the manuscript Syriac new series 11 from the Russian National Library seems to be the only almost complete collection of the Syriac Marian hymns. The history of its acquisition from C. Tischendorf in 1859, along with the attendant circumstances, may provide indirect evidence of its presence in the Monastery of St Catherine, while its textual correspondence to the above-mentioned bifolia may testify even to its Sinaitic production.

The manuscript is written in a Melkite hand of approximately the ninth century. The closest example of Melkite writing may be found in the *Lives of Holy Women* of AD 779, which was written over the Old Syriac version of the New Testament of the fourth century in the famous palimpsest Synai Syr. 30.¹⁵

The unquestionable Melkite origin of Syr. new series 11 is demonstrated by its contents, as well as by the palaeography. Firstly, its most significant feature is the title 'Theotokos' (Syriac ܩܘܕܫܬܐ ܕܗܘܘܪܝܢ) which appears in a modified form in the manuscript's heading: ܩܘܕܫܬܐ ܕܗܘܘܪܝܢ ('we write *theotokia*'). Then a number of Greek words transcribed with Syriac characters such as ܩܘܕܫܬܐ (κειμήλιον), ܩܘܕܫܬܐ (παρρησία), ܩܘܕܫܬܐ (λιμήν) and so on, testify to the affinity of the Syriac *theotokia* to their Greek prototypes. Finally, Christological formulas defining the unity of the divine and human natures in Christ strongly distinguish these texts from those belonging to non-Chalcedonian Syriac traditions (Jacobite and so-called Nestorian). The texts collected in the manuscript are in fact selected *theotokia* of *stichera* and *kathismata*, including four *theotokia dogmatica* which, however, have no special marking. The latter, a type of *theotokia* which contains certain statements from the doctrine of the

¹⁴ S.P. Brock, *Catalogue of Syriac Fragments (New Finds) in the Library of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai* (Athens, 1995), 66–7, 268–71.

¹⁵ S.P. Brock, 'Syriac on Sinai: the main connections', in V. Ruggieri and L. Pieralli, eds., *EUKOSMIA: Studi miscellanei per il 75° di Vincenzo Poggi S.J.* (Soveria Mannelli, 2003), 106; see also A.S. Lewis, *Select Narratives of Holy Women from the Syro-Antiochene or Sinai Palimpsest as written above the Old Syriac Gospels by John the Stylite, or Beth-Mari Qanūn in AD 778*, *Studia Sinaitica* 9–10 (London, 1900).

Incarnation as its compulsory elements, are traditionally attributed to John of Damascus. In the early Greek and Syriac manuscript traditions, *dogmatica* were not sorted out from other *theotokia*. The later manuscripts studied by H.J.W. Tilyard provide us with a fixed number of *dogmatica* (32), while S. Eustratiades, in his survey of John of Damascus's works, published *incipits* of 48 *dogmatica*.¹⁶

Theotokia hymns represent clear evidence of a well-elaborated Old Testament typology of the Virgin Mary,¹⁷ which I have recently discussed in connection with the language and phraseology of the Greek and Syriac versions of the Old and New Testament.¹⁸

By the eleventh century, somewhat later than the time at which the *theotokia* collections were compiled, a Syriac translation of the *Octoechos* and some other liturgical books had appeared. An example of the earliest Syriac version of the *Octoechos*, partially preserved and considerably damaged, is the British Library manuscript Add. 17133, undated and of unknown origin. It seems that Syro-Melkite translation activity reached its climax no earlier than the thirteenth century. It is from this time onward that we have a considerable number of liturgical books, including the *Octoechos* or *Parakletike*, translated into Syriac. The most remarkable items containing numerous respective *theotokia* for eight tones are now held in the British Library and in St Catherine's Monastery on Sinai. These include Brit. Lib. Add. 14710 (dated by colophon to 1258), Brit. Lib. Add. 17233 (undated), Sinait. syr. 25 (1255), Sinait. syr. 123 (1286), Sinait. syr. 208 (1225), and Sinait. syr. 210 (1295).

Most of these manuscripts were copied in north-western and western Syria, since the colophons mention towns and villages in the regions of modern Aleppo (Sinait. syr. 208) and Homs (Brit. Lib. Add. 14710); two of the manuscripts were copied in the Monastery of the Virgin (later dedicated to St Catherine) on Mt Sinai (Sinait. syr. 25 and Sinait. syr. 210). These facts testify firstly to the presence of strong Melkite communities in Syria in the thirteenth century, which still kept Syriac as a language of their liturgy (soon after this

¹⁶ H.J.W. Tilyard, *The Hymns of the Octoechos*. Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae, Transcripta V (2 pts, Copenhagen, 1949), pt. 2, 105–62; S. Eustratiades, 'Ο Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνὸς καὶ τὰ ποιητικὰ αὐτοῦ ἔργα, *Νέα Σιών* 27 (1932), 703–12.

¹⁷ Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, 'Mary in Eastern Church literature', in A. Stacpoole, ed., *Mary in Doctrine and Devotion* (Dublin, 1990), 58–80; M.B. Cunningham, 'The meeting of the old and the new: the typology of Mary the Theotokos in Byzantine homilies and hymns', in R.N. Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, Studies in Church History 39 (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester NY, 2004), 52–62; C. Hannick, 'The Theotokos in Byzantine hymnography: typology and allegory', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), 69–76; see also G.R. Woodward, *The Most Holy Mother of God in the Songs of the Eastern Church* (London, 1919).

¹⁸ N. Smelova, 'Biblical allusions and citations in the Syriac *theotokia* according to the manuscript Syr. New Series 11 of the National Library of Russia, St Petersburg', in D. Thomas, ed., *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, The History of Christian–Muslim Relations 6 (Leiden, 2006) 369–91; *idem*, 'The language of symbols: the typology of the Mother of God in translated Syriac hymnography', *Symbol* 55 (2009), 94–120 (in Russian).

Syriac was completely replaced by Arabic); secondly, they testify both to the existence of a considerable number of Syriac-speaking monks on Sinai at this time and to a full range of services in Syriac.

By the eleventh century, Greek and Melkite Syriac texts penetrated into the West Syrian tradition, frequently called 'Jacobite' after Jacob Baradaeus, the founder of the West Syrian ecclesiastical hierarchy. This process was attested by appearance of *tköptí* (ܬܟܘܦܬܝܐ) hymns (lit. 'supplications'), divided into eight tones in the early collections of hymns (proto-*byt gzí* (ܒܝܬ ܓܙܝܐ), dating back to the beginning of the eleventh century. This octonary structure of *tköptí* hymns seems to be based on the Greek system of the *Octoechos*. Moreover their very name is probably the calque (loan translation) of the Greek παρακλητική ('pleading'), the other name of the book of *Octoechos*. The earliest manuscripts containing *tköptí* hymns are kept in the Vatican Library (Vat. sir. 94 [between 1010 and 1033]) and in the British Library (Add. 14714 [1074–1075]; Add. 17140 [eleventh century]).¹⁹ Manuscript Vat. sir. 94 was copied in the region of the Euphrates near modern Malatia in Turkey; the other two are of unknown origin. All three manuscripts are known to have been acquired from the Monastery of the Virgin (Dair as-Suriani) in Wadi-Natrun in Egypt, which from the tenth century was the greatest depository of the West Syrian manuscripts in the Middle East.

From the thirteenth century onward, we find a great number of manuscripts containing *tköptí* hymns, the most remarkable of them being Brit. Lib. Add. 17238, Paris Syr. 337 and Cambridge Add. 1993 (all undated). Later tradition ascribed this type of hymn to Rabbula, bishop of Edessa († 435), as in Brit. Lib. Add. 17238 and the much later codex Orientalis 308 (XL) of the Laurenziana Library in Florence;²⁰ and also to St Ephrem the Syrian († 373), as in Mingana 372 in the Birmingham University Library.²¹ Although both of these attributions are obviously uncertain, the former has survived until the present day, since the name for the hymns in the modern *byt gzí* collections is *tköptí rbwytí*; in other words, 'supplications of Rabbula'.²²

Among the *tköptí* in the earliest collections, one can find the following types of hymns: 'of repentance' (ܬܟܘܦܬܝܐ ܕܬܘܒܝܬܝܐ), 'to martyrs' (ܬܟܘܦܬܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܕܝܐ), 'for the departed' (ܬܟܘܦܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܬܝܐ) and finally 'to the Theotokos' (ܬܟܘܦܬܝܐ ܕܝܗܘܘܪܝܐ). Among these latter I have found textual equivalents to the *theotokia* from the ninth-century collections as well as from the eleventh-century – thirteenth-century Melkite books of the

¹⁹ S.E. Assemani and G.S. Assemani, *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae codicum manuscriptorum catalogus* (3 vols, Rome, 1758–59), vol. I/2, 500; G.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana* (3 vols, Rome, 1719–28), vol. 1, 487, 613; W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (3 pts, London, 1870–72), pt. 1, 324.

²⁰ J.J. Overbeck, ed., *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae Episcopi Edesseni, Balaei aliorumque opera selecta* (Oxford, 1865), 245–6; S.E. Assemani, *Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurenzianae et Palatinae codicum MSS Orientalium Catalogus* (Florence, 1742), 78, XLIII.

²¹ A. Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts* (3 vols, Cambridge, 1933–39), vol. 1, cols. 683–5.

²² Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri*, 245–8.

and *troparia* contain a prose accentuation and inconstant number of syllables, which are criteria of the so-called 'free verse'.

I shall take as an example the above-mentioned early Christian hymn, 'Υπὸ τὴν σὴν εὐσπλαγχνίαν', for which I provide in the first column the text contained in the papyrus John Rylands Library 470, transcribed and reconstructed by P.F. Mercenier, and in the second column, the text of the *theotokion* which remains in constant liturgical use up to the present day. Here the Greek text is followed by the Syriac Melkite translation found in the manuscripts Brit. Lib. Add. 17133, Brit. Lib. Add. 14710, Sinait. syr. 208, Sinait. syr. 210, Sinait. syr. 123 and Syr. new ser. 11.

ὕπὸ [τὴν σκέπην τῆς εὐσπλαγχνίας σου καταφεύγομεν, ὦ	‘Υπὸ τὴν σὴν εὐσπλαγχνίαν καταφεύγομεν, Θεοτόκε·	Under your mercy we take refuge, o God- bearer.
Θεοτόκε· τ[ὰς ἡμῶν ἰκεσίας μὴ παρ-	Τὰς ἡμῶν ἰκεσίας μὴ παρεΐδης ἐν περιστάσει·	Do not disregard our supplications in misfortune,
εἶδες ἐν περιστάσει ἄλλ' ἐκ κινδύνου	ἄλλ' ἐκ κινδύνων λύτρασαι ἡμᾶς,	but deliver us from dangers,
ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς [σὺ ἡ μόνη [ἀγνή καὶ	μόνη ἀγνή, μόνη εὐλογημένη. ²⁴	the only pure and blessed one!
ἡ εὐλογ[ημένη ²⁵		
ܘܢܘܨܘܬܘܢܐ ܟܦܘܬ ܕܘܘܟܐ ܟܘܠܟܘܢ ܕܝܢܐ ܩܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܘܟܐ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ ܕܘܠܘܢ	Under the cover of your mercy we find protection, God-bearer, and we offer our supplication to you: Do not reject the prayer of your servants, but deliver us from every suffering, as you are the only pure and blessed one.	

Even here we can observe that the translators neither intended nor were able to convey the rhythm and melody of the Greek hymn in a Semitic language. A definitive assessment of the nature of the Syriac prosody has yet to be made. Elena Mescherskaya, who has studied the issue, defines this as an accentual-syllabic type of which is strongly connected to the musical system. She has also distinguished between the metrical types of translated Syriac verse and original Syriac compositions.²⁶

I prefer not to determine a special metre for the Syriac hymns studied in this chapter, but accept a priori a sequence of accents that corresponds to

Patristica 16 (Berlin, 1985), 77–81; repr. in S.P. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Christianity. History, Literature and Theology* (Aldershot, 1992).

²⁴ *Parakletike etoi Oktoechos e Megale*, 446. A translation of this version is given in the third column.

²⁵ Mercenier, 'L'antienne mariale grecque la plus ancienne', 230.

²⁶ E. Mescherskaya, 'Syriac prosody: the main issues', *Palestinskiy Sbornik* 28/91 (1986), 171–7 (in Russian).

Syriac standard spelling (just as in early medieval Greek hymnography). One can at least say that both the number of syllables and placement of accents in the Syriac translations are quite different from those in the Greek originals. Moreover, as one can see from the other examples of Syriac *theotokia*, the translation always contains many additional epithets and expressions and does not follow the Greek model of using words of the same root and of similar sounds (as, for example, below in the *theotokion* of the first tone built on the contrapositions). All of this completely changes the sound perception of a translated Syriac text in comparison with the Greek.

The next question is whether it was possible to reproduce Greek morphological structures by means of a Semitic language. It is obvious from the Syriac *theotokia* which can be compared with their Greek prototypes that Syriac sentences almost always follow the Greek colons, or phrases, which are the keys to hymnography and church music. Sometimes, as in the case of the *theotokion* of the seventh tone below, the word order in a sentence, usually flexible in Syriac, follows a specific Greek order – but this is an exception rather than a rule for the Syriac *theotokia*. Epithets are for the most part interpreted in Syriac as participles, adverbs are mostly complex, the adverbial participle is usually translated as a verb, and so on.

As for the set expressions used by the translators, the most common are ܠܚܕܝܢܐ (‘peace be to you’) for χαίρε or χαίροις, ܡܠܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܝܢ (‘full of grace’) for κεχαριτομένη (‘one to whom grace has been shown’) and ܡܠܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܝܢ (‘all-blessed’), ܕܥܘܠܡܝܢ ܕܥܘܠܡܝܢ (‘give blessing’) for μακαρίζω, ܡܠܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܝܢ (‘beyond time’) has no Greek equivalent, but it seems to have the same meaning as ܡܠܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܝܢ (‘before the ages’) for πρὸ αἰώνων and so on.

The third problem consists in tracing the ways in which Greek hymnography penetrated into the West Syrian milieu. The only method which provides us with representative results is to undertake a comparative study of Greek, Syro-Melkite and West Syrian texts of the relevant Marian hymns.

Firstly, let us turn to the Greek *theotokion* of the first tone found in the tenth-century manuscript from St Catherine’s Monastery, Sinait. gr. 778 (fol. 4v), as well as in the modern editions of the *Parakletike*:

Χαίροις παρ’ ἡμῶν,	Hail to you from us,
ἅγια Θεοτόκε Παρθένε,	holy God-bearer and Virgin,
τὸ σεπτὸν κειμήλιον	the sacred treasure
ἀπάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης,	of the whole universe,
ἡ λαμπὰς ἡ ἄσβεστος,	the unquenchable lamp,
τὸ χωρίον τοῦ Ἀχωρήτου,	the container of the Uncontainable,
ὁ ναὸς ὁ ἀκατάλυτος	the indestructible temple.
Χαίροις, ἐξ ἧς Ἄμνός ἐτέχθη,	Hail, for the Lamb was born from you,
ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου.	Who has taken [away] the sin of the world.

The Syro-Melkite version represents a free interpretation with a number of corrections. It is represented by the ninth-century *theotokia* collection of St Petersburg, as well as by the thirteenth-century manuscripts of the

Octoechos (Sinait. syr. 25, Sinait. syr. 208, Sinait. syr. 210 and Brit. Lib. ddd. 14710):

ܥܠܡ ܠܘܕ ܡܗ ܗܘ ܗܘܠܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	Hail to you, the most holy of us all,
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	God-bearer and Virgin,
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	the abode of humility
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	in which every creature finds life.
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	[Hail] to you, the unquenchable lamp,
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	the abode proper [to God] and inconceivable,
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	the temple glorified and indestructible.
ܥܠܡ ܠܘܕ ܡܗ ܗܘ ܗܘܠܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	Hail to you, as you gave birth to the Lamb of God
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	Who accepted the sin and impiety of the world. ²⁷

The West Syrian supplicatory hymn to the Virgin of the first tone is found in the manuscripts Vat. sir. 94, Brit. Lib. Add. 14714, Brit. Lib. Add. 17140, Brit. Lib. Add. 17238, Paris Syr. 337 and others. It was evidently translated from the same Greek original, but the West Syrian translation is quite different from the Melkite one:

ܥܠܡ ܠܘܕ ܡܗ ܗܘ ܗܘܠܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	Hail to you, the most holy of us all,
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	God-bearer and Virgin,
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	the treasury glorified and worthy
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	of the whole universe,
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	the lamp shedding the flame
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	and the dwelling-place of the inconceivable one,
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	the pure temple of the Creator of the whole
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	creation.
ܥܠܡ ܠܘܕ ܡܗ ܗܘ ܗܘܠܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	Hail to you, as through you
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	the Lamb took his name
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	who accepted the sin of the world
ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܢܐ	and saved it. ²⁸

Differences were obviously introduced into the Syriac translations for the purpose of explaining and elucidating the original Greek text. When comparing the two Syriac versions, we find that the West Syrian supplication is sometimes closer to the Greek text than the Melkite hymn is, since the latter gives many additional epithets and images which lead to the further development of imagery. For instance, we read in Greek, 'τὸ σεπτὸν κειμήλιον ἀπάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης' ('the sacred treasure of the whole universe'), which is interpreted in the West Syrian tradition as 'treasury glorified and worthy of the whole universe'. Meanwhile, the Melkite text reads, 'the abode of humility in which every creature finds life': the sentence is thus enlarged and given the extra nuances in meaning.

When translating the epithet 'ὁ ναὸς ἀκατάλυτος' ('the indestructible temple'), the Melkites add the attribute 'glorified' whereas the West

²⁷ Syr. new series 11, fol. 1v. The translation is a modified version of that published in Smelova, 'Biblical allusions and citations in the Syriac *theotokia*', 382.

²⁸ Vat. sir. 94, fols 142v–143r.

Syrians add 'pure'. In Melkite interpretation, the image of the Lamb (Ἀμνός) is given an additional specification, namely, the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29, 36). Thus this example of the *theotokion* indicates a direct influence of the Greek text on West Syrian hymnography without the participation of a Melkite translation.

West Syrians tried to represent the images and notions of the Greek hymns as accurately as possible and for the most part avoided adding anything, as long as there was no disagreement with their doctrinal position.

An example of such an approach is the *theotokion* of the sixth/second tone. Its original Greek text is found in the oldest Greek manuscripts of the *Octoechos*, Sinait. gr. 1593 (fol. 66r) as well as in the eleventh-century Sinait. gr. 778 (fol. 38r). The text below is quoted from the edition of the *Parakletike* where it is placed within the Saturday Vespers service on 'κύριε, ἐκέκραξα' (such a position as well as its contents suggest the designation of the *theotokion* as a *dogmatikon*).

Τίς μὴ μακαρίσει σε, Παναγία Παρθένε; Τίς μὴ ἀνυμνήσει σου, τὸν ἀλόχευτον τόκον; ὁ γὰρ ἀχρόνως ἐκ Πατρὸς ἐκλάμψας Ἰὺς μονογενής, ὁ αὐτὸς ἐκ σοῦ τῆς Ἀγνῆς προήλθεν ἀφράστως σαρκωθείς, φύσει Θεὸς ὑπάρχων, καὶ φύσει γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος δι' ἡμᾶς· οὐκ εἰς δυάδα προσώπων τεμνόμενος, ἀλλ' ἐν δυάδι φύσεων ἀσυγχύτως γνωριζόμενος· Αὐτὸν ἐκέτευε, Σεμνή Παμμακάριστε, ἐλεηθῆναι τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν. ²⁹	Who will not proclaim you blessed, all-holy Virgin? Who will not glorify you, birth-giver without labour? For timelessly the only-begotten son has shone from the father, and from you, the pure one, the same was incarnate and born inexplicably. Being God by nature, He for us became man by nature, not being divided into two persons, but in two natures without confusion is acknowledged. Supplicate to him, O humble and all-blessed one, that our souls may be granted mercy.
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The Syriac translation is found in the eleventh- to thirteenth-century manuscripts of the *Octoechos*, including Brit. Lib. Add. 17133, Brit. Lib. Add. 14710, Sinait. syr. 25, Sinait. syr. 208 and Sinait. syr. 210, as well as the manuscript Syr. new series 11. It is curious that in the St Petersburg manuscript this *theotokion* is placed within the second tone, while in the other Syriac Melkite manuscripts as well as in the Greek tradition it is placed in the sixth, or the second plagal tone:

ܩܘܠܘ ܠܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܘܢ ܥܘܠܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܘܢ ܥܘܠܘܢ	Who will not proclaim you blessed, pure and holy Virgin?
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²⁹ *Parakletike etoi Oktoechos e Megale*, 451.

Thus the three Syriac hymns to the Mother of God may serve as illustrations for three different types of penetration of Byzantine hymnography into Syriac-speaking Christian communities of the Middle East. First, Syriac Christians made their own translations of Byzantine hymnography; second, they partially borrowed from existing Syriac (Melkite) translations and edited them according to the dogmatic formulas accepted by the denomination; and finally, they borrowed existing translations with minimum alteration.

Sebastian Brock, in his article on Syriac translation techniques, deliberately leaves out the translation of Greek liturgical books carried out by the Melkites from the ninth century onward.³⁶ Indeed, this section of the Syriac literature stands apart from the original compositions by Syriac authors. One can note that the language of these translations differs from the Syriac language proper, in particular from the classical language of the fourth through to the seventh centuries. Its phraseology is in many respects adapted to the structure of the Greek language. This is reflected in the somewhat limited vocabulary, frequent use of transcription of Greek nouns and particles, peculiar punctuation, correspondence of Syriac phrases to Greek colons and other characteristics.

At the same time, the Syriac translations of the Greek *theotokia* are poetic texts which are filled not only with theological terms and doctrinal statements, but also with artistic images. These latter, being expressed by the means of a Semitic language, develop in their own way the typology of the Mother of God which is so characteristic of Byzantine hymnography.

³⁶ Brock, 'A history of Syriac translation technique', 3.

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Depicting the Salvation: Typological Images of Mary in the Kokkinobaphos Manuscripts

Kallirroe Linardou

Typos or ‘type’ – better known as a ‘prefiguration’ – proved to be a flexible vehicle of biblical exegesis that is known to have flourished since the early Christian period.¹ *Typoi* were developed as exegetical tools that established Old Testament prototypes for the events recounted in the New Testament.² A rich repertoire of typological correlations is found in exegetical literature and hymnography, as well as in biblical catenae, which deserve a special mention as they managed to convey methodically the allegorical and instructive character of the Scriptures. Finally, ecclesiastical homilies developed an articulate typological vocabulary, thus providing the Christian Fathers with an excellent medium for theological discussion and debate in response to the ongoing struggle for the definition and consolidation of Christian dogma. A group of such homiletic texts appropriated for oral delivery on established Christological and Mariological feast-days exerted a decisive influence in the development of the visual exposition of several typological motifs.³

Marian typology acquires visual form only from the ninth century onwards, principally in the ninth-century Psalters with marginal decoration. Therein and in the earlier surviving examples, Mary is prefigured as the holy city (as *Hagia Sion*) and the fleece of Gideon (Judg 6:36–40),⁴ and later on as the holy mountain

¹ M. Cunningham, ‘The meeting of the old and the new: the typology of Mary the Theotokos in Byzantine homilies and hymns’, in R.N. Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*. Studies in Church History 39 (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester, NY, 2004), 52–62, esp. 53–4, nn. 8–11.

² *ODB*, vol. 3, 1714.

³ D. Mouriki, ‘Αἱ βιβλικαὶ προεικονίσεις τῆς Παναγίας εἰς τὸν τροῦλλον τῆς Περιβλέπτου τοῦ Μυστρά’, *Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον* 25 (1970), Μελέται, 217–51, esp. 220, nn. 9–10; S. Der Nersessian, ‘Program and iconography of the frescoes of the Parecclesion’, in P. Underwood, ed., *The Kariye Djami* (4 vols, Princeton, 1975), vol. 4, 305–46, esp. 311, n. 38.

⁴ S. Dufrenne, *L’illustration des psautiers grecs du moyen âge*, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques (Paris, 1966), vol. 1, 28 (fol. 93v), 32 (fol. 121r), 61 and pls 18 (Sion), 12, 54 (Gideon). The typological association of Mary with *Hagia Sion* was studied

(Dan 2:31–5).⁵ A rich and equally interesting selection of her prefigurations is found in an eleventh-century illustrated Greek *Physiologos*, where Mary is equated with the ark of the covenant, the tabernacle, and its accoutrements.⁶

The twelfth century saw a proliferation of such a visual vocabulary in connection with the Theotokos. Before then, Mariological visual typologies were only used intermittently and not in a cohesive and organised pattern. The first ensembles that have survived from Byzantine art and manifest the systematic attempt at pictorial articulation of a comprehensive cycle of Marian prefigurations are the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts of the middle of the twelfth century,⁷ and an icon from Sinai representing the Virgin *Vrephokratousa* in the midst of a choir of figures from the Old and the New Testament (Plate 9.1), dated by Titos Papamastorakis to the middle of the twelfth century.⁸

The Kokkinobaphos manuscripts, two almost identical and lavishly illustrated books containing six sermons of the monk Iakovos on the early life of the Mother of God, were executed in the same Constantinopolitan workshop under the direction of their author and bear the hallmarks of an aristocratic commission.⁹ The Sinai icon kept in St Catherine's Monastery hints, albeit indirectly, at an urban/secular environment and it might also have been a Constantinopolitan work.¹⁰ Both examples are imbued with

by A. Xyngopoulos, 'Η κηρόχυτος γραφή τοῦ Χρυσσοτόμου', *EEBS* 21 (1951), 49–58.

⁵ See the eleventh-century (1066) Theodore Psalter: S. Der Nersessian, *L'illustration des psautiers grecs du moyen âge*, BCA (Paris, 1970), vol. 2, 37, pl. 46; C. Barber, *Theodore Psalter – Electronic Facsimile* (University of Illinois and the British Library, 2000), fol. 84r.

⁶ M. Bernabò (with G. Peers and R. Tarasconi), *Il Fisiologo di Smirne. Le miniature del perduto codice B.8 della Biblioteca della Scuola Evangelica di Smirne* (Florence, 1998), pls 76–81, 85–6.

⁷ H. Omont, *Miniatures des homélies sur la Vierge du moine Jacques (MS grec 1208 de Paris)*, Bulletin de la Société Française de reproductions de manuscrits à peintures (Paris, 1927), vol. 2; C. Stornajolo, *Miniature della Omelia di Giacomo Monaco (cod. Vatic. Gr. 1162) e dell'Evangelario Greco urbinato (cod. Vatic. Urbin. gr. 2)*, Codices e Vaticanis Selecti, series minor 1 (Rome, 1910); I. Hutter and P. Canart, *Das Marienhomiliar des Mönchs Jakobos von Kokkinobaphos, Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1162*, Codices e Vaticanis Selecti 79 (Vatican City, 1991).

⁸ G. and M. Sotiriou, *Icônes du Mont Sinai* (Athens, 1958), vol. 2, 73–5, pls 54–6; D. Mouriki, 'Icons from 12th to 15th century', in K.A. Manafis, ed., *Sinai. Treasures of Saint Catherine's Monastery* (Athens, 1990), 105, n. 27, pl. 19; T. Papamastorakis, 'Icon of the Virgin Brephokratousa with figures from the Old Testament', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens and Milan, 2000), no. 28, 314–16.

⁹ Hutter and Canart, *Marienhomiliar*, 17; J.C. Anderson, 'The illustrated sermons of James the Monk: their dates, order and place in the history of Byzantine art', *Viator* 22 (1991), 69–120, esp. 85, 100–1; K. Linardou, 'Reading two Byzantine illustrated books. The Kokkinobaphos manuscripts (Vaticanus Graecus 1162 and Parisinus Graecus 1208) and their illustration' (unpubl. PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2004) chapter 4, 278–85.

¹⁰ Papamastorakis, 'The Virgin Brephokratousa', 314–16. See also E.N. Tsigaridas, in *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπεδίου. Παράδοση – Ιστορία – Τέχνη* (Mt Athos, 1996), vol. 2, 364, fig. 309, for a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century icon of Christ Pantokrator from the

the same conceptual ideas and manifest the same theological insight and sophistication in their design. The exposition of Mary's prefigurations therein represents two consecutive stages in the same vein of interpretative/edifying theology and in this respect it anticipates developments of the Palaiologan period. In effect, the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts constitute the first step in this process, while the Sinai icon appears to be of a more advanced stage of systematisation. Therefore, I am inclined to concur with Papamastorakis in dating the icon not earlier than the middle of the twelfth century.

The purpose of my chapter is to discuss the iconographic peculiarities of the Kokkinobaphos typological cycle, the visual formulation of its theological argument and the implications of the specific theological agenda for the process of identifying the patron of the monk Iakovos. Space limitations prevent the examination of all typological images of Mary contained in the two manuscripts, either in the form of full-page frontispieces or in the form of subtle iconographical details of the narrative cycle. I will focus my attention on a selection of four frontispieces that exemplify the uniqueness and importance of the Kokkinobaphos visual testimony, i.e. Jacob's vision, Moses's encounter of the burning bush, the couch of Solomon and, finally, Isaiah's vision and his purification.

Apart from being a vivid and visually pleasing illustrated biography of Mary, the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts could also be seen as representing an extended theological treatise that propagated the fundamental doctrines of the East Christian Church. The narrative cycle of the illustration was supplemented by an extensive typological cycle of full-page frontispieces introducing each sermon that promulgated specifically (a) the dogma of the Incarnation and its importance for the completion of the divine plan of salvation; (b) Mary's pronounced role within it; and (c) the hypostatical union of Christ's two natures as well as his identification as the true God and Saviour.

The inclusion of the typological cycle is not strictly dictated by the text of the sermons, yet its presence serves and reinforces the theological argument of the books. The connection with the homilies is indirect and the choice of the prefiguration frontispieces was facilitated by a consecrated tradition manifested in liturgical practices and homiletic verbal formulae. The visual exposition of the typologies combined narrative information with visual exegesis and appears to have followed the biblical narration closely.

The message of the typological cycle is theological and instructive. It is primarily Christological/soteriological and only secondarily Mariological. Mary is acknowledged as the indispensable medium of the Incarnation who facilitated the accomplishment of the divine plan of salvation. Nevertheless,

Vatopedi Monastery, Mount Athos that presents its viewer with a polished nimbus similar to those we find in Sinai icons of this period. The author associates this technical detail, common to icons of Sinai and Mount Athos, with Constantinople (I would like to thank Dr Anastasia Drandaki, Curator of the Byzantine Collection of the Benaki Museum, for drawing my attention to this icon).

Christ is the cause of salvation and as such he is exalted visually as the true Christian God.

The second sermon of Iakovos on Mary's Nativity is prefaced by a full-page miniature (Plate 9.2) divided into three narrative zones that represent the departure of Jacob from his father's house, at the top; his journey into Mesopotamia, in the middle; and finally his dream and vision of the heavenly ladder at the bottom. Iakovos's text does not mention Jacob and his adventures explicitly. In the introduction to the sermon there is a brief comment on the patriarch but it does not explain the visual narration adequately.¹¹ The textual starting point of the frontispiece is the biblical account of Genesis 28:1–5, 10–15.

In the top zone, Jacob is depicted standing submissively between his father Isaac, who reclines on an elaborate couch, and his mother Rebecca, who is seated behind him: Isaac sends Jacob away to Mesopotamia in order to find a wife from the house of Laban (Gen 28:1–5). In the intermediate zone, Jacob is represented at the shore of the river Jordan, where he sits and undoes his shoelace in order to remove his shoes and cross the river (Gen 32:11).

So far the episodes depicted are mentioned and explained clearly by the caption accompanying the miniature.¹² Yet the episode represented in the bottom zone is not explained or mentioned by it. It corresponds with the narration of Genesis 28:10–15, where the dream and vision of Jacob are recounted.

In the miniature, Jacob sleeps on the stones that he has piled up under his head. A ladder runs across the picture diagonally and angels ascend it and descend it. At the top of the ladder and from within a segment of the sky appears Christ.¹³ In the Kokkinobaphos miniature, Christ represents the God of the Jews mentioned in the Septuagint; he replaces the figure of Mary that is normally represented here in later examples of the vision where the Mariological connection is more articulately pronounced in visual terms. In our manuscripts, the Mariological association is only implicit and subtle. What prevails here is the Christological/soteriological layer of interpretation.

Jacob's ladder is one of the *typoi* selected from the Old Testament and related to Mary.¹⁴ The pericope of his vision was read during the Great Vespers the

¹¹ *In Nativitatem Sanctissimae Dominae nostrae Dei Genitricis Mariae*, PG 127, col. 572B, copied from George of Nikomedeia, *Oratio IV, In conceptionem sanctissimae Dei Genitricis*, PG 100, col. 1412B.

¹² Caption: 'Ὁ ἀποχαιρετισμὸς τοῦ Ἰακώβ πρὸς Λάβαν εἰς Μεσοποταμίαν, 'The farewell of Jacob [and his journey] to Laban in Mesopotamia'.

¹³ The same pictorial motif of Christ emerging from an arc of heaven in Jacob's dream is first seen in Vat. gr. 747, f. 50r, the Octateuch of the eleventh century. Unlike the earlier Octateuch, all twelfth-century illustrated copies reproduce a motif where the arc of heaven is decorated with stars. See K. Weitzmann, M. Bernabò and R. Tarasconi, *The Byzantine Octateuchs, The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septuagint* (2 vols, Princeton NJ, 1999), vol. 2, figs 391–4.

¹⁴ See, for example, John of Damascus's homily on the Nativity of Mary: B. Kotter, ed., *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, Patristische Texte und Studien 7, 12, 17, 22, 29 (5 vols, Berlin and New York, 1969–88), vol. 5, 149–50; P. Voulet, *S. Jean Damascène, Homélie sur la nativité et la dormition*, SC 80 (Paris, 1961), 46–78; trans. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 53.

day before the feast-days of Mary's Nativity, Annunciation and Koimesis (Dormition).¹⁵ Mary is celebrated as the spiritual or the living ladder between God and humanity, the bridge leading to the creator and consequently to human salvation. She is also the medium through which God will come into life, the vehicle of his Incarnation. According to Iakovos's text, which refers to Mary, 'The ladder has been raised, by which the king of the divine powers will descend to our most humble sojourn.'¹⁶ The Nativity of the Mother of God initiates the divine plan of redemption. As such Jacob's ladder has been connected with the second sermon of Iakovos and has been chosen as its frontispiece.

Earlier representations of the subject exist principally in illustrated manuscripts and its iconographic scheme varied little over the course of the centuries.¹⁷ Yet according to the surviving evidence, the Kokkinobaphos frontispiece provides the first clear visual attempt to connect Jacob's vision with Mary typologically. As it stands, the Kokkinobaphos miniature marks a shift in the visual interpretation of a biblical episode, which, up to the twelfth century, was used in various interpretative contexts with no Mariological connection. The typology had been extensively employed in the homiletic literature and hymns dedicated to Mary since the Early Christian age, yet its use in art explicitly in connection with Mary was developed only during the Palaiologan period, when a medallion of Mary at the apex of the ladder replaces the figure of Christ found in earlier examples.¹⁸

Finally, one cannot fail to notice a few peculiarities as regards the selection of the episodes depicted in our frontispiece. As Irmgard Hutter has already pointed out,¹⁹ the designer of the manuscript manifested a profound interest in the illustration of the biblical narration preceding Jacob's vision, which resulted in an unfortunate undermining of the main typological theme.

It has already been mentioned that the episodes represented in our frontispiece correspond closely with the biblical account. A similar connection can be established between the iconography of the events described in the top register of the image and the illustration of the biblical narration as it survives

¹⁵ J. Mateos, ed. and trans., *Le Typikon de la Grande Église. Ms. Sainte-Croix n° 40, Xe siècle. Introduction, texte critique, et notes*, OCA 167 (2 vols, Rome, 1963), vol. 2, 18, 252 and 369–70; G. Engberg, ed., *Prophetologium, Pars altera, Lectiones anni immobilis I.1* (Hauniae, 1980), 12–13, 88 and 145.

¹⁶ PG 127, col. 576B: "Ἡρεῖσται ἡ κλίμαξ, δι' ἧς τῶν οὐρανίων δυνάμεων ὁ βασιλεὺς πρὸς τὴν ἡμῶν καταβήσεται παροικίαν.

¹⁷ A. Ferrua, *Le pitture della nuova catacomba di Via Latina* (Vatican City, 1960), 49–50, pl. XCVII; K. Weitzmann and H.L. Kessler, *The Cotton Genesis, The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septuagint I* (Princeton NJ, 1986), 17–21, figs 10–17; L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Images as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999), 208–10, fig. 23; Weitzmann, Bernabò and Tarasconi, *Byzantine Octateuchs*, vol. 1, 101 (with bibliography); vol. 2, figs 391–4.

¹⁸ Mouriki, 'Προεικονίσεις', 235–6, pl. 86. For more examples from the Palaiologan era, see T. Papamastorakis, "Ἡ ἔνταξη τῶν προεικονίσεων τῆς Θεοτόκου καὶ τῆς Ὑψωσης τοῦ Σταυροῦ ὁ ἕνα ἰδιότυπο εἰκονογραφικὸ σύνολο στὸν Ἅγιο Γεώργιο Βιάννου Κρήτης", *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας* 14 (1987–88), 315–28, esp. 318, nn. 21–2.

¹⁹ Hutter and Canart, *Marienhomiliar*, 27.

in the manuscripts of the Byzantine Octateuchs. Vat. gr. 747 (eleventh century) and all three Octateuchs of the twelfth century present us with illustrated versions of the episodes that preceded Jacob's departure for Mesopotamia: first Rebecca advises Jacob and addresses Isaac and then Isaac sends Jacob away.²⁰

In the Byzantine Octateuchs, these three episodes have been depicted in two separate vignettes. In the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts, there has been an attempt to combine the specific three episodes into one narrative strip. As a result, in the Kokkinobaphos frontispiece Rebecca sits on the far right facing the back of her son while her gesture of speech seems pointless; Jacob is already addressed by his father who reclines on an elaborate couch, unlike the seated Isaac of the Octateuchs.

The iconography of the Jacob episodes in the Kokkinobaphos prefiguration miniature and the Octateuchs is not identical but it is probable that the Kokkinobaphos artist was familiar with their illustration.²¹ He more likely used the earlier one (Vat. gr. 747, eleventh century) or something very like it as his model and tried to include as many narrative details as possible into one register. This, at any rate, would help explain some of the dysfunctions of the derivative iconography.

I cannot provide a clear explanation for all the problems related to the iconography and meaning of this frontispiece. The failure of the caption to describe what has been represented in the bottom zone is exceptional, when seen within the context of the manuscript. Iconographical clarity has been sacrificed to superfluous narrative and the subject matter of the frontispiece has been undermined by the redundant inclusion of secondary biblical episodes related only vaguely to the main theme.

One explanation for this anomaly might be that the designer was carried away by his biblical sources, both verbal and visual, or that the visual connection between Mary and her *typos* was still in an experimental stage and thus the designer was not sure of what exactly should be depicted.

Alternatively, a tentative suggestion would be that the unusually descriptive illustration of the Kokkinobaphos frontispiece may have been employed in order to reinforce the theological agenda of the book by delineating the connection of the Mother of God not only with Jacob, but also with the patriarch Isaac (both ancestors of king David), and thus reinforcing her and her son's connection with the biblical king/messiah of Isaiah's prophecy. In this context it is notable that in the Sinai icon (Plate 9.1) Jacob enjoys a preferential treatment as well: he is depicted as an elderly patriarch

²⁰ Weitzmann, Bernabò and Tarasconi, *Byzantine Octateuchs*, vol. 1, 99–100; vol. 2, figs 379a–382a, 379b–382b, 383–6.

²¹ It has been argued convincingly on stylistic grounds that the Kokkinobaphos miniaturist participated in the execution of the illustration of the Seraglio Octateuch. See I. Hutter, 'Die Homilien des Mönchs Jakobus und Ihre Illustrationen' (unpubl. PhD thesis, University of Vienna, 1970), 506; J.C. Anderson, 'The Seraglio Octateuch and the Kokkinobaphos master', *DOP* 36 (1982), 83–114, esp. 89–93; Weitzmann, Bernabò and Tarasconi, *Byzantine Octateuchs*, vol. 1, 337.

paired with a representation of his vision and occupies a whole compartment exclusively on his own.²²

Iakovos's third sermon on Mary's *Eisodia* (Presentation) is introduced with a full-page frontispiece representing two episodes from the life of Moses as reported in the biblical account of Exodus 3:1 – 4:17 (Plate 9.3).²³ Again the correspondence of the frontispiece with Iakovos's text seems very poor; there are no direct indications to clarify the choice of the specific miniature save for a brief reference to Moses in the introduction of the sermon.²⁴

The focus of the composition is the head of youthful Christ-Emmanuel represented in the midst of a stylised bush, which is surrounded by leaping flames. On either side of the bush stands Moses as a young adult taking off his sandals on the left, obeying the instructions of the divine messenger, and on the right picking up the tail of the serpent/rod, the instrument that would enable the young prophet to perform miracles.

Representations of the Theophany on Mount Sinai appear from the sixth century.²⁵ The development of the iconography varied over the course of centuries. The contradictions of the biblical account itself were a main source of confusion as regards the consistent representation of the episodes described.²⁶ According to the Septuagint, God manifested himself to Moses in the form of an angel from within the burning bush, as was the case in the Paris Gregory where the biblical episode has been associated with the spiritual illumination of baptism.²⁷ Yet, a couple of lines further along, the voice of God called Moses out of the flames, as might have been the case in the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts, where Christ-Emmanuel is depicted within the bush.

This contradiction in the text may account for the representation of divinity either by the inclusion of the hand of God or by the depiction of an angel. In the earliest representations only the hand of God appears above the bush.²⁸ In the Octateuchs of the twelfth century and the Palaiologan period, as well as in both Kokkinobaphos manuscripts, the arc of heaven is abandoned and an angel flies towards Moses.²⁹

In Christian exegesis, especially in homilies and hymnography, the association of the burning bush and Moses's transforming rod as typologies of

²² Papamastorakis, 'The Virgin Brepokratousa', 314.

²³ Caption: Τὸ Σινὰ ὄρος ὁ Μωϋσῆς καὶ ἡ Βάτος, 'Mount Sinai, Moses and the Bush'.

²⁴ *Ex divinis Scripturis selecta in illud "Facta est puella annorum trium"*, PG 127, col. 600B.

²⁵ St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai: K. Weitzmann and G.H. Forsyth, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai* (Michigan and Basel, 1973), pls CXXVI, CLXXXII; San Vitale, Ravenna: F.W. Deichmann, *Frühchristliche Bauten und Mosaiken von Ravenna* (Baden-Baden, 1958), pls 316, 318.

²⁶ D. Mouriki, 'The Octateuch miniatures of the Byzantine manuscripts of Cosmas Indicopleustes' (unpubl. PhD thesis, Princeton University, 1970), 51–62, esp. 52.

²⁷ Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 217–21, esp. 218–19, fig. 28.

²⁸ See, for example, Vat. gr. 747, fol. 74r: Weitzmann, Bernabò and Tarasconi, *Byzantine Octateuchs*, vol. 1, 149; vol. 2, fig. 611.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 149; vol. 2, 612–13. For the Palaiologan period see Der Nersessian, 'Parecclesion', 336–8.

Mary was developed early. Gregory of Nyssa (fourth century) was the first to interpret the biblical incident of the bush that burned but was not consumed and the rod that was transformed into a serpent as allegories of virgin birth.³⁰ Proklos of Constantinople (fifth century) associated the burning bush with Mary's virginity and the virginal birth/Incarnation of her son.³¹ As the bush remained unconsumed by the flames, Mary remained an undefiled virgin although she gave birth to Christ. The justification of Mary's virginity had always been a substantial argument for the dogmatic articulation of the two natures of Christ – the human and the divine – in one *hypostasis*. References to the burning bush in a Mariological context may also be found in the works of Andrew, metropolitan of Crete (c. 660–740).³² Furthermore, the lesson from Exodus is read twice on the feast-day of Mary's Annunciation, during the Great Vespers and in the liturgy.³³ Iakovos and his commissioner must have been accustomed to the association of Mary and the bush, if not visually, at least as a verbal formula in homilies, hymns and the liturgy.

A peculiar iconographic feature in the Kokkinobaphos frontispiece is the figure of Christ-Emmanuel circumscribed by the flames. To my knowledge, this is the only surviving Byzantine example of the specific combination. The lack of visual comparisons is compensated by a textual testimony; the German pilgrim Theitmar, who visited Sinai in 1217, witnessed an artefact in the Chapel of the Burning Bush that at some point replaced the disintegrating original relic.³⁴ This object, either a three-dimensional metal work or a metal relief image, reproduced a representation of the bush circumscribing the figure of the Lord within it. Anastasia Drandaki, in her publication on this subject, rightly remarks that 'the iconography observed at Sinai, the actual *locus sanctus*, must have been known in Constantinople, at least among the capital's intellectual elite'.³⁵ In icons and monumental painting of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Mary – either full-length or in a medallion with Child-Christ depicted within the flames – becomes the standard iconographical scheme in representations of the episode.³⁶ The Mariological connection is firmly established by then. Yet, the earliest visual example of the burning bush with a direct Mariological association had been recorded much earlier, in the eleventh century, in the *Physiologos* of Smyrna

³⁰ J Daniélou, ed. and trans., *La Vie de Moïse, ou traité de la perfection en matière de vertu* (Paris, 1955), 39–40, 57 n. 3.

³¹ See his first homily on Mary: N. Constatas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity. Homilies 1–5, Texts and Translations* (Leiden and Boston, 2003), 137–8, lines 16–17.

³² *Homilia IV in sanctam nativitatem semperque virginis Mariae*, PG 97, col. 869A.

³³ Mateos, *Le Typikon*, vol. 1, 110; Engberg, *Prophetologium*, 91, 94.

³⁴ A. Drandaki, 'Through pilgrims' eyes: Mt Sinai in pilgrim narratives of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', *DChAE* 27 (2006), 491–504, esp. 495–500.

³⁵ Drandaki, 'Through pilgrims' eyes', 498.

³⁶ For the Palaiologan era see Der Nersessian, 'Parecclesion', 336–7, nn. 197–203; Mouriki, 'Προεικονίσεις', 217–18. For icons of the thirteenth and fourteenth century see Drandaki, 'Through pilgrims' eyes', 499–500, nn. 52–4, figs 5–6.

where a simulated icon of Mary with Child-Christ is situated above Moses and the divine apparition.³⁷ How can we explain the absence of any direct allusion to Mary in our Kokkinobaphos frontispiece? Where we expect to see Mary we see instead Christ.

Representations of the youthful Christ appeared quite prominently in Stoudite manuscripts of the eleventh century.³⁸ In the mid-twelfth century, the youthful Christ became what we usually describe in iconographic terms as Christ-Emmanuel.³⁹ This iconographic type of Christ appears to have acquired strong Komnenian connections during the twelfth century.⁴⁰ Principally it was used to combine the two natures of Christ and to visualise the dogmatic term: Word Incarnate. Moreover, Christ-Emmanuel has been visually connected with Moses in cases where the biblical hero functions as the antitype of Christ the Prophet, the one whose coming was prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:15 by Moses himself.⁴¹ A similar twofold function applies to our prefiguration miniature. In the Kokkinobaphos frontispiece we have the burning bush/Mary, which burns but is not consumed, and it/she circumscribes the youthful Christ-Emmanuel, the Word Incarnate, the pre-existent *Logos* who was created by God before all time. In addition to this,

³⁷ Bernabò, *Il Fisiologo*, 61–2, fig. 81.

³⁸ For the Theodore Psalter (London, British Library Add. 19.352, date: 1066) see S. Der Nersessian, *L'illustration des psautiers grecs du moyen âge II: Londres, Add. 19352*, BCA 5 (Paris, 1970), figs 1, 163, 296. For Paris. gr. 74, fols 64r, 167r (11th century), see S. Der Nersessian, 'Recherches sur les miniatures du Parisinus graecus 74', *JÖB* 21 (1972), 109–17, esp. 112–14, pl. 6; S.G. Tsuji, 'The headpiece miniatures and genealogy pictures in Paris. gr. 74', *DOP* 29 (1975), 167–203, figs 1–3; K. Weitzmann, 'The ode pictures of the aristocratic Psalter recension', *DOP* 30 (1976), 67–84, esp. 80, fig. 35.

³⁹ A. Weyl Carr, 'Gospel frontispieces from the Komnenian period', *Gesta* 21/1 (1982), 9. For a discussion on the iconographic type of Christ-Emmanuel and its theological significance see G. Millet, *La Dalmatique du Vatican. Les Élus. Images et croyances* (Paris, 1945), 61–81; G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Prefaces in Byzantine Gospels* (Vienna, 1979), 100–110, esp. 108.

⁴⁰ Manuel I Komnenos (1143–80) adopted a child-like Christ as his major coin image and labelled it Emmanuel: M.F. Hendy, *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire, 1081–1261*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 12 (Washington DC, 1969), 111–12, pls 12–13; P. Magdalino, 'The phenomenon of Manuel I Komnenos', *BF* 13 (1988), 171–99, esp. 179–80, n. 30; I. Kalavrezou, 'Imperial relations with the Church in the art of the Komnenians', in N. Oikonomides, ed., *Byzantium in the 12th Century. Canon Law, State and Society*, Society for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies, Diptycha-Paraphylla 3 (Athens, 1991), 25–36, esp. 31–2.

⁴¹ See Weyl Carr, 'Gospel frontispieces', 9; Weitzmann, Bernabò and Tarasconi, *Byzantine Octateuchs*, vol. 1, 217–18; vol. 2, figs 1079–83. Moses as an antitype of Christ – though not in the iconographic scheme of Christ-Emmanuel – was also current in Psalters with marginal decoration: Khludov Psalter, Moscow, Hist. Mus. gr. 129, fol. 90v (9th century); Mount Athos, Pantokrator Monastery, cod. 61, f. 128r (9th century): for both examples, see K. Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters* (Cambridge, 1992), 72, figs 84–5. For the youthful Christ represented as the true God prophesied by Zacharias, see Paris. gr. 74, fol. 107r (11th century): H. Omont, *Évangiles avec peintures byzantines du XIe siècle* (Paris, 1908), vol. 2, pl. 95.

Moses, the biblical hero who witnessed the Theophany on Mount Sinai, is the antitype of the true and only prophet, the Son of God.⁴²

Therefore, the Kokkinobaphos frontispiece constitutes the most accurate and sophisticated rendering in pictorial terms of this biblical typology in relation to Mary, the virginal conception of her son, and the salvific meaning of the Incarnation. A prefiguration of the Mother of God has been manipulated in such a way that the soteriological/messianic aspect of Christ's Incarnation through a virgin is highlighted. Mary is acknowledged as the medium of the Incarnation and not as the cause of salvation, and this is why her presence is merely hinted at through her identification with the bush.

In Jacob's ladder, Christ appeared at the top of the ladder/Mary. In the scene of the burning bush/Mary, it is again Christ-Emmanuel who occupies the centre of the composition. In the next prefiguration, it will finally be the adult Christ who reclines on an elaborate couch/Mary. In all cases it is the Mother of God who is prefigured but only as the instrument that will give birth to the real Christian God.

The aspect of Mary's virginity, which is only presumed in our frontispiece, provides the missing link with Iakovos's third sermon on Mary's *Eisodia*, for which it has been chosen as a frontispiece.⁴³ Throughout the sermon it is Mary's purity and virginal virtues that are delineated. She is no ordinary woman, she who enters the holy of holies of the Jewish temple, where no woman was ever allowed in and even the high priest of the Jews was permitted to enter only once a year. According to Iakovos's introduction, Mary is a meadow, 'the sweetest smelling of meadows, not adorned with spring flowers which possess the pleasure of the season that soon withers, but [a meadow] which radiates the sweet smell of grace'.⁴⁴

The fourth sermon dedicated to Mary's betrothal to Joseph is introduced with a very rare prefiguration of Mary, a representation of the Couch of Solomon (Plate 9.4). The visual testimony of the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts constitutes the first surviving pictorial example of this specific typology of Mary, which up to the twelfth century was only known as a verbal formula

⁴² For both interpretations see the analysis of Hutter, in Hutter and Canart, *Marienhomiliar*, 40.

⁴³ For a different view see K.M. Collins, 'Visual piety and institutional identity at Sinai', in R.S. Nelson and K.M. Collins, eds, *Holy Image and Hollowed Ground. Icons from Sinai*, Exhibition Catalogue, J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles, 2006), 110, fig. 91, where the author states that the fact that the specific frontispiece 'does not accompany the Annunciation homily removes it from the specific link between the Burning Bush and Mary's virginity'. Nevertheless, Mary's purity appears as an equally prominent factor in Iakovos's third sermon dedicated to her Presentation (*Eisodia*) as it does in his homily on the Annunciation. Therefore, the allusive concept of Mary's virginity as expounded in the specific prefiguration miniature accords well with the content of the sermon it prefaces.

⁴⁴ PG 127, col. 600A, καὶ λειμώνων ὁ εὐωδέστατος, οὐκ ἔαρινοῖς ἐπικομῶν ἄνθεσιν, εὐμάραντον ἔχουσιν τῆς ὥρας τὴν τέρψιν' ἀλλὰ χάριτος ἐκπέμπων εὐωδίαν, copied from George of Nikomedeia, *Oratio in sanctissimae Dei Genitricis Ingressum [in templum]*, PG 100, col. 1420D.

of the homiletic literature.⁴⁵ The biblical starting point of the prefiguration is Song of Songs 3:7–8. Mariological associations inspired by the same biblical text, principally expounded in homiletic literature, justify the selection of the specific image as an introduction to the fourth sermon.⁴⁶ Therein, Mary is equated with the Bride of the Song and Christ with her Bridegroom. This parameter links the Couch frontispiece with the sermon it prefaces; Mary's betrothal to Joseph in the sermon is juxtaposed with her mystical nuptial union with her Son and Bridegroom.

In the centre of the picture, Christ reclines on an elaborate couch with his legs crossed. Sixty armed archangels arranged in six consecutive lines of ten surround him. Once again, a typological frontispiece meant to prefigure Mary bears no visual indication whatsoever that would demonstrate such a connection. Unlike what will become a commonplace in later representations of the same theme where an icon of the Virgin with Child-Christ is depicted prominently on the couch,⁴⁷ in the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts Christ dominates the image.

The Couch of Solomon enjoyed a preferential treatment by Iakovos. He not only provided this miniature with a long exegesis, which is significantly missing from the five remaining prefiguration miniatures, but also instructed the beholder of his book to search for the interpretation of this image in the text.⁴⁸

Iakovos's exegesis is a summarised paraphrase of the last part of Gregory of Nyssa's sixth sermon, which analyses Song of Songs 3:7–8 and where the fourth-century father provides a mystical interpretation of the Song. The result is interesting because Iakovos succeeded in combining three different layers of interpretation – the Mariological, Christological and mystical – with minimal but vital alterations in the original text of Gregory.

According to his own words: 'The couch prefigured primarily the all-holy Mother of God, and then the soul of each one [of the mortals] to be saved.'⁴⁹ Mary is the couch we see in our picture upon which Christ reclines comfortably. She is the nuptial bed on which the mystical alliance for the salvation of humankind would be accomplished (Mariological interpretation).

⁴⁵ S. Der Nersessian, 'Le lit de Solomon', *Recueil des travaux de l'institut d'études Byzantines* 8/1, Mélanges G. Ostrogorsky I (Belgrade, 1963), 77–82, esp. 78; A. Xyngopoulos, 'Au sujet d'une fresque de l'église Saint-Clement à Ochríd', *Recueil des travaux de l'institut d'études Byzantines* 8/1, Mélanges G. Ostrogorsky I (Belgrade, 1963), 301–6, esp. 303; K. Linardou, 'The couch of Solomon, a monk, a Byzantine lady and the Song of Songs', in Swanson, *The Church and Mary*, 73–85.

⁴⁶ See, for example, pseudo-John of Damascus, *Homilia II in nativitatē b. v. Mariae*, PG 96, cols 692–6 (according to CPG 8119, this homily should be attributed to Theodore of Studios); Germanos I, *In presentationem I*, PG 98, cols 292–3; trans. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 146.

⁴⁷ Der Nersessian, 'Le lit', fig. 28.

⁴⁸ Caption: 'Ἡ κλίνη τοῦ Σολομώντος, ἥ κύκλῳ δορυφοροῦσιν ἐξήκοντα δυνατοί: Ζήτει τὴν ἐρμηνείαν ὄπισθεν τοῦ φύλλου, 'The Couch of Solomon, which is surrounded in a circle by the sixty valiant [ones]: Seek the interpretation on the back of the folio.'

⁴⁹ Vat. gr. 1162, fol 80v and Paris. gr. 1208, fol. 107v: 'Ἡ μὲν κλίνη πρῶτον μὲν εἰκόνιζε τ(ὴν) ὑπεραγίαν θε(οτό)κον' ἔπειτα δὲ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου ψυχῆν τῶν σωζομένων'

Moreover, through Mary, the couch can signify the soul of every Christian who wishes to be mystically connected with the king of the Song/God and to be saved (mystical interpretation). According to Iakovos again: 'Therefore, it is obvious that another Solomon is signified through him [Solomon]. He himself a descendant of David, according to the flesh, whose name is Eirene [peace], the true King of Israel.'⁵⁰ Solomon, the peaceful King, is the antitype of Christ, as Moses was in the burning bush miniature (Christological/soteriological interpretation). As a result we should not expect to see Solomon or Mary reclining on the couch because Christ the real king and God has replaced all. Finally the sixty archangels, who protect the relaxed Christ, are our five senses. According to Iakovos, the five senses multiplied by twelve give the number sixty: 'For the number of sixty reveals the unconquerable of the soul.'⁵¹

Iakovos has indeed combined all known interpretations of the Song (mystical, Christological and Mariological) in his exegesis and moreover has explained the iconography of an odd and unfamiliar composition efficiently. Although our author used extensively the words of an influential specialist of the Song, he managed to manipulate Gregory's text in order to communicate to his reader a range of interpretations not included in his source. Gregory's commentary on the Song of Songs provides a mystical exegesis of the biblical text, which was interpreted as an allegory reflecting the struggle of the human soul to be connected with God.

Finally, the last part of Iakovos's exegesis is of instructive/didactic character; it delineates and broadcasts the significance of unity among Christians under Christ who is perceived as the commander and ruler of the church.⁵² All believers ought to be alert and ready to protect Mary, Christ and

⁵⁰ Vat. gr. 1162, fol. 80v and Paris. gr. 1208, fol. 107v–108r: οὐκοῦν εὐδῆλον ὅτι ἄλλος Σολομῶν διὰ τούτου σημαίνεται ὁ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος Δα(υ)ὶδ τὸ κατὰ σάρκα γενόμενος ᾧ ὄνομα Εἰρήνη ἡ ἀληθινὸς τοῦ Ἰ(σρα)ήλ βασιλεύς. Literally, the name Eirene in the Greek language means 'peace' but it is also a female name. Interestingly, the Hebrew name Solomon (שְׁלֹמֹה [Shlomo]) roughly translates to 'peaceful'. It is therefore apparent that here the usage of the word is twofold: the name Eirene is used both literally as a translation of the Hebrew word-name and metonymically because Solomon was renowned as the peaceful King in contrast to his father David (1 Chr 22: 8–9 [I would like to thank Dr Rina Avner for this reference]). Finally, it is intrinsically probable that this play on the word peace[ful] constitutes an allusion to Eirene the *Sevastokratorissa*, Iakovos's patron and probable commissioner of the Vatican *Kokkinobaphos*.

⁵¹ Vat. gr. 1162, fol. 81r and Paris. gr. 1208, fol. 108r: διότι τ(ῶν) ἐξήκοντα ὁ ἀριθμὸς(ς) τὸ ἀκαταγώνιστον δηλοῖ τῆς ψυχ(ῆ)ς

⁵² Vat. gr. 1162, fol. 81v and Paris. gr. 1208, fols 108v–109r: οὐκοῦν πάντες οἱ τὴν θείαν ἐνδυσάμενοι πανοπλίαν μίαν κυκλοῦσι τοῦ βασιλέως κλίνη(ν) μία παράταξ(ι)ς καὶ στρατὸς εἷς καὶ μία κλίνη τουτέστιν ἐκκλησία μία καὶ λαὸς εἷς καὶ νύμφη μία οἱ πάντες γενήσονται ὑφ' ἐνὶ ταξίαρχῃ καὶ ἐκκλησιαστῇ καὶ νυμφίῳ πρὸς ἐνὸς σώματος κοινωνίαν συναρμοζόμενοι ὡς μακάριον τὸν ἐν τούτοις εὐρεθῆναι ὀπλίτην ἐν ἀπαθείᾳ καὶ καθαρότητι τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως κλίνην τουτέστιν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ καρδίαν φυλάσσοντα ἵνα γένηται ὁ βασιλεὺς οὐκ ἐν καθέδρᾳ ἀλλ' ἐν ἀνακλίσει. 'Therefore, all [soldiers] who wear the divine panoply surround the one and only couch of the king. A single order and a single army and a single couch, which means a single church and one people and a single bride. Everybody will be under a single commander, ecclesiastes and bridegroom united together in the

his foundation. It could well be that Iakovos felt the need to be instructive because during most of the twelfth century, Christological disputes flourished in Byzantium.⁵³ The mystery of the Incarnation and Christ's divinity were challenged repeatedly both by revived dualist heresies, such as Bogomilism, and intellectual scrutiny initiated by those intellectuals involved in the study of philosophy and rhetoric.⁵⁴ Seen within this context, Iakovos's exhortations for vigilance and unity among Christians acquire a paramount importance for the interpretation of the specific prefiguration and the whole pictorial programme of the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts.

Last but not least, I wish to discuss Isaiah's vision and purification, an almost full-page miniature incorporated within the fifth homily on Mary's Annunciation, inserted after the salutation miniature (Plate 9.5).⁵⁵ Iakovos's text provides a rhetorical glorification of the mysterious Incarnation that took place during the salutation. According to his comments, a bodiless voice resounded causing the formless Son of God to be clothed in the corporeal nature of humans.⁵⁶ Mary conceived Christ through the voice of God, as it sounded the moment of Gabriel's salutation (*Protevangelion* 11:2).⁵⁷ The prophets of the Old Testament and their visions pre-announced the moment of Christ's conception. At this point the author interrupts his text with a biblical quotation, Isaiah 6:6–7, which describes Isaiah's purification during his vision. A representation of the vision is inserted within the same quotation.

The beholder of the manuscript is transferred to heaven and before the imaginary court of God who is represented as the Ancient of Days.⁵⁸ Behind

communion of a single body. May the soldier who will find himself [involved] in these be blessed, insensible to suffering and pure, protecting the couch of the king, which means his own heart, so that the king may be not on a throne but leaning [on a couch].'

⁵³ For the historical context of religious affairs in the late eleventh and twelfth century see P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), 366–92. For twelfth-century art and the religious disputes see E. Kantorowicz, 'The Quinity of Winchester', *Art Bulletin* 29 (1947), 73–85, especially 83–4; G. Babić, 'Les discussions christologiques et le décor des églises byzantines au XIIIe siècle. Les évêques officiant devant l'Hétimasie et devant l'Amnos', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 2 (1968), 368–86, esp. 368–72.

⁵⁴ *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*: Gouillard, ed. and trans., 'Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie: édition et commentaire', *TM* 2 (1967), 1–298, esp. 54 § 185, 61 § 250–65, 65 § 320, 69–70 § 390–400.

⁵⁵ *Carption*: 'Ὁπασία Ἡσαΐου, ἑωρακότος τὸν Κύριον ἐπὶ θρόνου' ὅτε ἀρθέντος τοῦ ὑπερθύρου τῆ ὑμνωδία τῶν σεραφίμ, ἐδέξατο δι' ἐνὸς τὸν θεῖον ἀνθρακάν (paraphrase of Is 6:1, 4), 'The vision of Isaiah, who saw the Lord sitting on a throne; when the lintel raised at the sound of the seraphim's hymns, he received from one of them the divine coal.'

⁵⁶ *In Sanctissimae Deiparae Annuntiationem, e sacris Scripturis desumpta*, PG 127, col. 641A–B.

⁵⁷ For the idea of the virginal *conceptio per aurem* (a kind of *parthenogenesis*) and the 'poetics of sound' in the school of Proklos, see Constanas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 273–313, especially 298, where the author specifically mentions and discusses Iakovos's homily on the Annunciation.

⁵⁸ See Hutter, 'Die Homilien', 343–7. For a discussion on the iconography and symbolism of the Ancient of Days see Millet, *La Dalmatique*, 42–4; A. Grabar, 'La

his throne a crowd of archangels arranged in consecutive facing pairs form the divine entourage. On either side of the angelic orders two archangels stand out and hold an elaborate curtain that runs across the whole composition, suspended above God. The curtain bears the symbols of the sun, the moon and the stars. The whole composition communicates an air of ceremonial grandeur probably inspired by imperial iconography. At the bottom of the scene Isaiah is depicted twice. As a tiny figure on the right, where he witnesses God for the first time, Isaiah extends his arms open in awe. At the bottom left, he receives the cleansing coal from a seraph that stands before a *ciborium*. The latter is the visual indication of the sanctuary and the altar.

Isaiah's vision does not lack earlier pictorial parallels and interpretations.⁵⁹ Yet, the Kokkinobaphos frontispiece combines earlier iconographical formulae along with new and unprecedented compositional features and most importantly a textual context with strong Mariological associations.⁶⁰ In the earlier examples of the vision, where its role ranged from a simple illustration of the biblical account to a Christological interpretation with obvious Eucharistic connotations, God is constantly represented as the enthroned Christ. In the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts, God as the Ancient of Days has

representation de l'intelligible dans l'art byzantin du moyen âge', *Actes du VIe congrès international d'études byzantines* 2 (Paris, 1951), 127–43, esp. 130–35; S.A. Papadopoulos, 'Essai d'interprétation du thème iconographique de la paternité dans l'art byzantin', *CahArch* 18 (1968–69), 121–36, esp. 132–6; Galavaris, *Illustrations of the Prefaces*, 93–100.

⁵⁹ In post-iconoclast Byzantine art, Isaiah's vision is recorded mainly in manuscript painting. In the *Sacra Parallela* (Vat. gr. 699, fol. 39v), K. Weitzmann, *The Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela, Parisinus graecus 923*, *Studies in Manuscript Illumination* 8 (Princeton, 1979), 146, fig. 349, the biblical account of the vision is juxtaposed with a visual account of Christ being witnessed by the prophet below him. In the Paris Gregory (Paris. gr. 510, fol. 67v), Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 281–4, fig. 11, the vision of Isaiah is combined with a representation of Gregory's ordination as bishop of Sasima and the visionary account forms an analogy to a historical event: Gregory's consecration. In the Vatican copy of the *Christian Topography*, Vat. gr. 699, fol. 72v (9th century), the text attached below the image draws a Christological interpretation of the vision as an allegory of Christ's sacrifice with obvious Eucharistic connotations: C. Stornajolo, *Le miniature della Topografia Cristiana di Cosma Indicopleuste. Codice vaticano graeco 699*, *Codices e Vaticanis Selecti* 10 (Milan, 1908), pl. 37; W. Wolska-Conus, ed. and trans., *Cosmas Indicopleustès topographie chrétienne. Introduction, texte critique, illustration, traduction et notes* 2, SC 159 (Paris, 1970), Book V, 166, 248–9. For an exegesis by the patriarch Germanos I where the purification of Isaiah's lips is perceived as the sanctification of the Eucharist, see Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 283, n. 13. The reception of the coal by Isaiah is represented in the monumental painting of Cappadocia around 900: J Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'Théophanies-Visions auxquelles participent les prophètes dans l'art byzantin après la restauration des images', in *Synthronon. Art et archéologie de la fin de l'antiquité et du moyen âge*, BCA 2 (Paris, 1968), 135–43, especially 138–42, fig. 1. For more examples in Cappadocia see C. Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises Byzantines de Cappadoce. Le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords* (Paris, 1991), 9, 27–8, 32–4, 38, 41, 88, 180, 220–1, 246, 338–9, and pls 19.1, 26.2, 29.1, 30–32.2, 61.1–2, 110.1–2, 132–4, 139.

⁶⁰ For earlier textual examples see: Basil of Seleucia, *In Sanctissimae Deiparae Annuntiationem*, PG 85, col. 425D; Sophronios of Jerusalem, *In Annuntiationem Sanctissimae Deiparae*, PG 87.3, cols 3220–1; Andrew of Crete, *In Dormitionem Sanctissimae Deiparae Dominae nostrae*, PG 97, col. 1069A.

replaced him.⁶¹ Moreover, his angelic entourage has multiplied significantly and the composition has been further elaborated by the inclusion of a curtain decorated with cosmic symbols. The figure of Isaiah has been depicted twice so as to indicate both the vision of the prophet and the marginal detail of his purification. Some of these features will be repeated in other representations of Isaiah's vision of the twelfth century.⁶² Nevertheless, the Kokkinobaphos miniature and the Sinai icon (Plate 9.1) remain the first surviving visual examples demonstrating an explicit connection of the vision with Mary and the Incarnation.

The iconography of the Kokkinobaphos miniature is interpreted perfectly by its descriptive caption, the biblical quotation, which is in physical proximity to the picture, and finally by Iakovos's exegesis that follows the illustration. Moreover, the insertion of Isaiah's visionary experience directly after the salutation completes the interpretation of its meaning.

The caption specifies the subject matter of the miniature and explicitly mentions the place and the time that the vision took place: Isaiah witnessed the enthroned God in heaven when the lintel (interpreted as a curtain in the miniature), which previously prevented his view, was raised at the sound of the hymns chanted by the seraphim.

Isaiah's purification is interpreted by the biblical quotation attached to the miniature.⁶³ In order to witness God, Isaiah had to be purified. This detail is visually recorded in the bottom left of the miniature. So far the correspondence between the text and the visual narrative develops with no problems.

But what does the vision of Isaiah mean in its Annunciation context? According to Iakovos's short exegesis that follows below the image, Isaiah's

⁶¹ One plausible explanation for this change in the iconography of the vision might be that it constitutes a veiled attack against Bogomilism, a revived dualistic heresy that flourished in Constantinople in the last decades of the eleventh century and during the first half of the twelfth century. According to Zigabenos's *Panoplia Dogmatica*, the Bogomils promulgated theories similar to those of Arius that challenged the dogma of the Incarnation and the equality of the persons of the Holy Trinity. Among other perceived sins, they reinterpreted Isaiah's vision to match their perception of the Holy Trinity: see PG 130, col. 1320B; Gouillard, 'Le Synodikon', 65 § 320. For the Bogomils see *ODB*, vol. 1, 301; D. Gress-Wright, 'Bogomilism in Constantinople', *Byzantion* 47 (1977), 163–85, esp. 172–7; and D. Smythe, 'Alexios I and the heretics: the account of Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*', in M. Mullett and D. Smythe, eds, *Alexios I Komnenos I: Papers* (Belfast, 1996), 232–59, esp. 235–44.

⁶² The Ancient of Days in Isaiah's vision appears again in an illustrated Psalter, Mount Athos, Vatopedi Monastery, cod. 760, f. 280v, albeit with no Mariological connection: P.C. Christou et al., eds, *Treasures of Mount Athos. Illuminated Manuscripts* (4 vols, Athens, 1991), vol. 4, 287, fig. 200. The date of the Psalter is disputed. The editors of the aforementioned publication date it to the eleventh century. Antony Cutler in *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium*, BCA 13 (Paris, 1984), no. 54, 106, dates it to the twelfth century. However, the Ancient of Days in the Athos Psalter is clearly identified as Jesus Christ by an abbreviated inscription on either side of his cruciform nimbus and the closed book/Gospel he holds. In the Kokkinobaphos miniatures the nimbus of God is bare and the caption identifies him cautiously as *the Lord*.

⁶³ PG 127, cols. 641C–644A.

vision and, more specifically, the reception of the coal was a biblical episode that prefigured the moment of Christ's Incarnation/conception through Mary. As the coal from the altar touched and purged Isaiah's lips/sins without burning him, the pre-existent Word occupied Mary's womb and purified it from the original sin without causing her any harm. Mary is the pair of tongs that touched the divine nature of Christ/coal without being consumed. Moreover, through Mary and the mysterious Incarnation of the son, the sinful past of humans was restored to its previous sinless glory. All believers were purified so as to become potential witnesses of God's majesty.

Isaiah's vision in the Kokkinobaphos manuscript is both a visionary theophany and a typological allegory that combines a Mariological and a Christological/soteriological interpretation. As Hutter remarked,⁶⁴ the moment of Christ's conception by Mary, which was signified by the purification of Isaiah, was also the moment that God appeared among people. The veil with the representations of the sun, the moon and the stars, virtually a curtain of heaven, was lifted up during the salutation at the sound of the hymns the seraphim chanted.⁶⁵ What was invisible became visible. The *stereoma*, which was meant to divide the terrestrial cosmos from heaven, was abolished. The rhetoric of the picture vividly demonstrates the paramount importance of Christ's Incarnation and the Annunciation to Mary.

According to the Kokkinobaphos frontispiece, the Incarnation was not just a stage in the process of salvation, but was in itself salvific. The representation of God and his appearance in front of the beholder's eyes only after the salutation grant the Annunciation with visual exclusivity as regards the visibility of God's eternal essence. For, in the incarnated Christ, the concealed eternal essence of God represented by the Ancient of Days has been made physically visible through Mary, and therefore in Christ and his mother lies the promise and the guarantee that this world can be ultimately saved.

The visual message of the Kokkinobaphos typological cycle underlines and advocates a Christological/soteriological agenda steadily and unambiguously to such an extent that Mary's role is undermined. Although it is Mary and the dogma of the Incarnation that is to be prefigured, Christ repeatedly dominates the pictures. The typologies in the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts epitomise Mary's pronounced theological function as a medium and guarantor of the

⁶⁴ Hutter and Canart, *Marienhomiliar*, 65–6.

⁶⁵ For the association of the curtain with representations of the sky in theophanies and Last Judgement scenes see A. Grabar, 'L'iconographie du ciel dans l'art chrétien de l'Antiquité et du haut Moyen Âge', *CahArch* 30 (1982), 5–24, especially 10–12, fig. 9; V. Kepetzi, 'Quelques remarques sur le motif de l'enroulement du ciel dans l'iconographie byzantine du jugement dernier', *DChAE* 17 (1993–94), 99–112, esp. 102–4, 110–12, fig. 6. See also H.L. Kessler, 'Medieval art as argument', in B. Cassidy, ed., *Iconography at the Crossroads. Papers from the Colloquium Sponsored by the Index of Christian Art, Princeton University, 23–24 March 1990* (Princeton NJ, 1993), 59–70, esp. 64, n. 32, where the author discusses a homily by John Chrysostom on the Epistle to Hebrews that states: 'The heaven is a veil, for as a veil it walls off the holy of holies; the flesh is a veil hiding the Godhead.'

Incarnation, yet this was not veneration of the Mother of God for her own sake, but more significantly a theological argument in defence of the perfect, ineffable and inexplicable unity of divinity and humanity in the person of Christ.

Iakovos the monk was a knowledgeable theologian. The edifying argument of his illustrated sermons along with his camouflaged exhortations for vigilance and unity among Christians in the final part of his exegesis seem suspiciously familiar with contemporary Christological disputes that had flourished in Constantinople since the ascension of Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) to the Byzantine throne and continued throughout the twelfth century.⁶⁶ The dogma of the Incarnation and the hypostatic union of Christ's two natures were repeatedly challenged. The socio-historic context of the first half of the twelfth century in which Iakovos lived and worked provides much evidence of heresy to which all strata of Byzantine society were susceptible. And Iakovos, after all, was a monk and as such his interest in theology was fully justified. The tantalising question is, whose expectations and needs did Iakovos attempt to meet with his instructive illustrated sermons and why?

I have argued elsewhere in detail that the first Kokkinobaphos manuscript, and that is the Vatican copy of the homilies,⁶⁷ was intended for the private use and instruction of a woman of the Komnenian court, namely Eirene the *Sevastokratorissa*, sister-in-law to the emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1142–80) and a known patron of literature.⁶⁸ Significantly, Iakovos did not only serve as spiritual advisor to the *Sevastokratorissa*, but was in frequent correspondence with her. In my reading of this correspondence, collected in a beautifully made parchment codex of the twelfth century, today in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris. gr. 3039),⁶⁹ the quality of the relationship the correspondents shared and the interests and literary tastes of Eirene became clear. More importantly, the theological concerns arising from the typological cycle of the Kokkinobaphos pictorial programme correlate with the issues broached by Iakovos in his correspondence with Eirene. According to the information extracted from the epistles, the noblewoman had a taste for the 'heretical' philosophy of the Greeks, and as such, her 'orthodoxy' might have been questionable. Her eagerness for logic under the influence of a heightened interest in philosophy was evidently meant to be superseded by the Orthodox theology of Iakovos as expounded in his illustrated sermons. These were meant to suit both Eirene's needs and tastes. As it appears, Iakovos was preoccupied with the salvation of a single soul, that of his patroness, Eirene the *Sevastokratorissa* and evidently, in his eyes, Mary was the appropriate vehicle for this, even in disguise.

⁶⁶ See generally R. Browning, 'Enlightenment and repression in Byzantium in the eleventh and twelfth centuries', *Past and Present* 69 (1975), 5–23.

⁶⁷ K. Linardou, 'The Kokkinobaphos manuscripts revisited: the internal evidence of the books', *Scriptorium* 61/2 (2007), 384–407.

⁶⁸ Linardou, 'Reading two Byzantine illustrated books', chapter 4, 254–77.

⁶⁹ See the recent edition of Iakovos's epistles in E. and M. Jeffreys, eds, *Iacobi Epistulae*, CChr ser.gr 68 (Turnhout, 2009).

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Section III: The Mother of God in the Middle Byzantine Homiletic Tradition

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John of Damascus on the Mother of God as a Link Between Humanity and God

Andrew Louth

Fifty years or so ago, in the wake of the proclamation of the doctrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin by Pope Pius XII, my topic would have been at least tinged with controversy. Henry Chadwick ended his justly famed article, 'Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian controversy', a paper given within a month or so of the promulgation of the dogma in 1950 and published later in 1951, by observing:

The whole tendency of Monophysite piety was to minimize the significance of Christ's soul ... [T]he result is that Christ loses solidarity with us ... No doubt there were many diverse factors which contributed to the rise in the position of the Virgin during the fifth and sixth centuries. But perhaps a fundamental factor is this need felt by popular Monophysite piety (and for the most part popular piety remains Monophysite to this day) for a figure in complete solidarity with us. The holy archimandrite Eutyches confesses to Flavian that for him Mary is ὁμοούσιος ἡμῖν ('consubstantial with us'), 'but until today I have not said that the body of our Lord and God is of one substance with us'; for the body of God cannot be a merely human body. Accordingly, there seems little need for surprise that such a story as the Assumption of the Virgin became current in Monophysite circles during this period.¹

The thrust of Chadwick's remarks is that the Virgin Mary becomes the link between God and humankind because the Christ of popular piety has become too divine to effect such a link. St John Damascene, despite his fierce rejection of Monophysitism in many treatises, would be regarded from this perspective as embracing 'Monophysite piety' in virtue of his enthusiastic endorsement of the doctrine of the Assumption. There is an interesting question to be discussed about the relationship between learned theology and popular piety especially in the case of devotion to the Mother of God, but Chadwick's remarks (made

¹ H. Chadwick, 'Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian controversy', *JTS* n.s. 2 (1951), 163–4. (This paper was delivered before Henry Chadwick's death in 2008.)

a long time ago, and certainly not to be held against his memory now) seem to short-circuit that discussion.

The case of Marian devotion is interesting because it raises in quite a stark way the question of the very different theological resources on which such devotion draws. It is evident that such piety has been nourished by two very different sources: on the one hand, reflection in apocryphal literature, especially the apocryphal gospels, on the infancy of Christ and, in the background, on the life of his mother, the blessed Virgin; and, on the other hand, reflection on the implications of conciliar definitions in matters Christological – the implications of these definitions, let it be noted, not usually the definitions themselves.

On the doctrinal side, Byzantine understanding of the Mother of God can be summed up in three epithets: Θεοτόκος, ἀειπαρθένος and παναγία ('the one who gave birth to God' or 'Mother of God', 'ever-Virgin' and 'all-holy'). The authority for these epithets is to be found in the records of the early ecumenical councils.² The first of these, Θεοτόκος, was affirmed at the council of Ephesos (431), as a way of safeguarding Christological orthodoxy; the other two are affirmed, more or less in passing, by later councils: ἀειπαρθένος at Constantinople II (553), and παναγία by the use of the virtual equivalent ἄχραντος at Nicaea II (787). What is striking about this is that the dogmatic assertions about the blessed Virgin implied by these terms were intended to safeguard orthodox Christological dogma, not to provide the foundations for a Mariology with the purpose of supplementing an adequate Christology.

The apocryphal literature provides very different material: imagined, and indeed imaginative, reflection on the hidden years of Christ's infancy and of the Virgin's childhood – years that must have exercised Christian curiosity from the very beginning, as the profusion of infancy gospels illustrates.³ Very quickly quite an elaborate tradition developed, the best, and most influential, witness being the so-called *Protevangelion of James*, a late-second-century work.⁴ This provides an account of the life of the conception and birth of the Virgin, her upbringing in the temple, her engagement to Joseph, more details about the birth of Christ and his infancy. The most obvious evidence of its influence in Byzantium is liturgical: the feasts of the Mother of God, celebrating her Conception, Nativity

² The so-called ecumenical councils were Church councils that legislated for the whole *oikoumene*, i.e., the world governed by the Roman or Byzantine emperor. There were seven of them, the first and last held at Nicaea, modern Iznik in Turkey, in 325 and 787, the rest mostly at or near Constantinople (in 381, in 451 at Chalcedon, a suburb of Constantinople on the other side of the Bosphoros, and in 553 and 680–1), save for one held at Ephesos in 431.

³ 'Infancy Gospels' is the name given to accounts of the life of Christ as a baby and infant, in contrast to other Gospels, including the canonical Gospels found in the New Testament, that pay more attention to the ministry of the adult Christ, and/or his trial, death on the cross and Resurrection from the dead. There are translations of these infancy gospels in J.K. Elliott, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation Based on M.R. James* (Oxford, 1993; rev. edn 2004), 46–122.

⁴ 'Protevangelion' is a modern term, meaning 'Gospel of the first [years]'; it is attributed to James, the Lord's 'brother' (claimed by the text to be his step-brother). For a translation, see Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 48–67.

and Presentation in the Temple, are all inspired by the *Protevangelion*. This text also had a powerful influence on the iconographic tradition, perhaps the fullest example of this being the cycle of mosaics illustrating the life of the Virgin in the narthex of the Church of the Chora in Constantinople.⁵ The *Protevangelion* is also a source for the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God, justifying it on empirical, rather than doctrinal, grounds.

I want to suggest that we see these two sources of reflection on the Virgin Mary as parallel to the two modes of Jewish exegesis, known as *aggadah* and *halakah*, the former providing narrative accounts that embroider the biblical text, initially the account of the Exodus, as well as providing stories about later figures in the Jewish tradition, such as rabbis, while the latter provides detailed elaboration and commentary on the moral teaching of the Torah.⁶ The sort of narrative elaboration found in the *aggadah* is paralleled in the apocryphal material, and indeed can already be found in some of the Gospel material, notably the infancy narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The Christian equivalent of the ethical *halakah* I suggest we find, not in the collection of ecclesiastical canons – the most obvious parallel – but in the doctrinal definitions, ratified by the councils. I am deliberately suggesting a morphological difference between Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity, or at least, Patristic (or maybe Eastern and Oriental Orthodox) Christianity, both finding significance in a narrative elaboration of their traditions, but finding defining significance in elaborated moral precept, on the Jewish side, and precise doctrinal definition, on the Christian side. The way in which, on this model, Christian doctrinal definition parallels Jewish moral precept indicates a fundamental divergence between the two developments of Second Temple Judaism,⁷ something I cannot pursue now, though I would observe that it is borne out in the way in which Rabbinic Judaism has developed differences over the interpretation of the Torah, that is in the realm of *halakah*, while Christian differences are, notoriously, over matters of dogma. Furthermore, as both *aggadah* and *halakah* are understood as developments, or unfoldings, of the fundamental revelation of the Torah, so the narratives of the *Protevangelion* and the related scriptural material, both canonical and apocryphal, as well as the doctrinal definitions – the Christian *aggadah* and Christian *halakah*, so to speak – draw out the Christian significance of the Scriptures: they are both ultimately exegetical methods. In the Christian case *aggadah* is often developed in a very particular way, peculiar to Christianity, and that is by means of what we have

⁵ The Kariye Djami, a mosque from the fall of Constantinople until it became a museum in modern Turkey, has a fine set of mosaics in the narthex that depict the infancy of the Virgin Mary: see P.A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami* (4 vols, London, 1966–75).

⁶ The Torah is the law revealed to Moses. In its written form, it corresponds to the Pentateuch of the Christian Bible, but it also embraces the oral tradition of the law, also revealed to Moses and handed down by word of mouth.

⁷ ‘Second Temple Judaism’ is the term used by scholars to denote the Hebrew religion during the period of the second temple, rebuilt c. 520 BC after the destruction of the first temple by the Babylonians, itself destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. ‘Second Temple Judaism’ can be seen as the common ancestor of both Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity.

come to call *typology* – indeed I would go so far as to say that Christian *aggadah* is almost invariably developed by this means; typology provides the interpretative structure, as it were, of Christian narrative *aggadah*. Take, for example, the story of Mary as one of virgins weaving the scarlet and purple cloth for the veil of the temple at the time of the Annunciation: as the body of Jesus is woven in her womb – the flesh of Christ, which is according to the Epistle to the Hebrews the veil (Heb 10:20) – Mary weaves the scarlet and purple of the veil of the temple that will be rent when the King (purple) to whom she gives birth surrenders his life on the cross (scarlet).⁸ Or again, many aspects of Christian belief about the Virgin Mary, from the earliest times, relate the Virgin Mary to the Virgin Eve: Mary's obedience redeems Eve's sin; Mary gives birth to God, while Eve exclaims that she has begotten a man – Cain (Gen 4:1); and so on.⁹ This way of thinking about the imaginative narratives, so important for the development of reflection on the Virgin Mary, as well as devotion to her (note how important the *Protevangelion* has been for the development of liturgical celebration of the Mother of God, as we saw earlier), is clearly capable of considerable elaboration. If we are to think of it as *aggadah*, as I have suggested, then we are drawing attention to its hermeneutical dimension: there is something being interpreted in these stories, they are not just satisfying a desire for imaginative detail. Typology is one of the ways of providing this hermeneutical dimension. We can, furthermore, ask what is the overall meaning of, say, the *Protevangelion*. A provisional answer is not difficult to find: the *Protevangelion* is about purity: the purity of the Virgin, the liturgical significance of purity.¹⁰ Here, however, is not the place to pursue this, fascinating though it has become. We must turn to the subject of this chapter: St John Damascene.

By the time of St John Damascene, all this reflection on the Virgin Mary – both dogmatic deduction and imaginative development – has been fully elaborated: he stands within a highly articulated Christological tradition, the tradition of the councils which he fiercely defended; he also stands within a well-developed liturgical tradition – most of the feasts of the Mother of God found in the Byzantine tradition had emerged by his day, the latest of these feasts, that of the Dormition (Koimesis, 'falling asleep' or death), based on much later apocryphal traditions than the *Protevangelion*, having by then been established for a couple of centuries.¹¹ How does John of Damascus understand

⁸ I know that Mary is said to be *spinning* thread, not weaving, but it is clear that the end result is the veil (see *Protevangelion* 10.1), and it is striking that from the time of Proklos of Constantinople (d. 446 or 447) onwards, when the imagery already there in the *Protevangelion* is suddenly developed, the metaphor seems to glide almost unconsciously from spinning to weaving, and Mary's womb is thought of as a loom rather than a spindle.

⁹ This inverse parallelism between the Blessed Virgin and Eve is often called in the Latin tradition the 'Eva-Ave' theory ('Ave' or 'Hail' being the first word addressed by the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary in the Latin version of the Gospel of Luke [Lk 1:28]).

¹⁰ I am here picking up on some of the discussion provoked by the original paper, and in particular the observations of Dr Mary Cunningham.

¹¹ For which see, most recently, S.J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin*

the Virgin as the link between God and humanity? It is not that Mary fulfils a mediatorial role Christ can no longer fulfil because devotion has raised him too high. Christ is the mediator, the link between God and humanity, but this is understood in terms of the elaborated Christology of the councils – not just those of the fourth century, but of the next two centuries too. It is not just that God and man meet in Christ; rather that in Christ God assumes and embraces a human nature and a human life: the Damascene's Christology, like that of the post-Chalcedonian interpretation of Chalcedon, is what Father Georges Florovsky called an 'asymmetrical Christology'.¹² The One who Christ is, is God, and it is God who assumes humanity. From where? From the Virgin. Without the Virgin and her free acceptance of God's request conveyed by the archangel Gabriel, God would not be able to embrace humanity: Mary therefore provides a necessary link. John expresses this in three ways: first in a narrative, retelling the evangelical events of Annunciation and Nativity in precise, technical language; secondly, in technical theological language expressed in formulae and defended; and thirdly, in imagery, drawn from the Scriptures and interpreted by way of typology. An example of the first is a passage from his *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*:

The Holy Spirit came upon her ... purified her, and gave her at once the power to receive the Godhead of the Word and to beget. Then the subsistent Wisdom and Word of God Most High, the Son of God, consubstantial with the Father, overshadowed her and, in the manner of a divine seed, from her chaste and most pure blood compacted for himself flesh animated with a rational and intellectual soul, the first-fruits of our compound nature, not by seed, but by creation through the Holy Spirit, the form not being put together bit by bit, but perfected all at once (*Expos* 46.16 ff.)¹³

Here the focus of the elaborations of the account – even those that directly concern the Virgin; for example, the detailed exposition of her perpetual virginity – is not on the Virgin herself, but on the necessary entailments of a Chalcedonian Christology.

The same is true of the technical language expressed in formulae: it is all primarily Christological; the implications for the status of the Virgin are just that – *implications*. Most of these formulae – both those that involve the Mother of God and those that are purely Christological – have one striking characteristic, and that is that they are antithetical, either based on

Mary's Dormition and Assumption (Oxford, 2002).

¹² Georges Florovsky coined the term 'asymmetrical Christology' (see his *Vizantiiskie Otsy V–VIII vv.* [Paris, 1933], 26). This expresses his insight that despite the Chalcedonian Definition seeking to express a balance between the humanity and divinity of Christ, this balance finds its fulcrum in the Divine Person of Christ. The divinity takes precedence and Chalcedonian theology is thus 'asymmetrical'.

¹³ All following references to John's writings are to B. Kotter's critical text, in *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, Patristische Texte und Studien 7, 12, 17, 22, 29 (5 vols, Berlin and New York, 1969–88). *Expos.* = *Expositio Fidei* (in vol. 2); *Fid.* = *De Fide contra Nestorianos* (in vol. 4); *Nativ.M.* = *Oratio in Nativitatem Sanctae Dei Genitricis Mariae*; *Dorm.* = *In Dormitionem Sanctae Dei Genitricis Mariae Orationes* (all in vol. 5).

the fundamental antithesis that Christ is God and man, or involving other antitheses such as fall–redemption. An example of this is the way John expresses the doctrine of what he calls the two births (of Christ):

For we know two births of the only-Begotten Son and Word of God, one from before the ages, immaterially and divinely, from the Father alone, according to which birth he was not born of a woman and is motherless, and the other, in the last days from a mother alone in the flesh in accordance with the divine economy and for our salvation, according to which birth he is fatherless. (*Fid.* 49.1–11)

Or more laconically in his sermon on the Nativity of the Mother of God: ‘for he [Christ] alone is only-Begotten from the Father alone, and alone <born> from a mother alone’ (*Nativ.M.* 10.19–20).

Most revealing, however, is the use of typological imagery. This typological imagery has a long history, going back to Justin and Irenaeus in the second century, exploding round about the time of the council of Ephesus, as we can see from the sermons of Proklos of Constantinople, and later in the *Akathistos Hymn*. A good example can be found in John’s first sermon on the Dormition:

You are the royal throne, around which the angels stand to see their Lord and creator seated upon it. You are called the spiritual Eden, holier and more divine than that of old; for in the former Eden the earthly Adam dwelt, but in you the Lord from heaven. The ark prefigured you, in that it guarded the seeds of a second world; for you gave birth to Christ, the world’s salvation, who overwhelmed <the flood of> sin and calmed its waves. The burning bush was a portrait of you in advance; the tablets written by God described you; the ark of the law told your story; the golden urn and the candelabrum and table, the rod of Aaron that had blossomed – all clearly were foreshadowings [of you]. (*Dorm.* 8)¹⁴

John goes on to mention the ‘flame of divinity’ (cf. Ex 13:21), the manna (Ex 16:31), the ‘nameless “name that is above every name”’ (Phil 2:90), the fiery furnace of Daniel (Dan 3:19ff.), Abraham’s tent in which Sarah baked ‘bread hidden in the ashes’ for the three angelic visitors (Gen 18:6), and then recalls, as if he had almost forgotten it, Jacob’s ladder (Gen 28:12).

What is striking about the examples that John chooses (or rather the tradition which John is following has chosen) is that they are all *places* where God is to be found, and most of these examples are *cultic*: the Virgin is the place where God is encountered and *worshipped*. So the Virgin is the throne of Isaiah’s vision (Is 6:1); the burning bush, before which Moses was ordered to remove his shoes, ‘for the place on which you are standing is holy ground’ (Ex 3:5); the ark of witness and everything it contained – the tablets of the Law (Ex 32:15f.), the golden urn (Ex 16:33), the candelabrum and table (Ex 25:30–40), the rod of Aaron which blossomed (Num 17:8). The Virgin is the place of God,

¹⁴ The translations from the homilies on the Dormition are those by Brian Daley, occasionally with slight modifications, in his *On the Dormition of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood NY, 1998), 183–239.

the shrine at which we worship – not her, but the one born of her, the God made flesh she presents to us. Mary is, if you like, *theotopos* – ‘place of God’! But in truth, she is more than that, she is θεοτόκος, the ‘one who gave birth to God’. She is not just an edifice, an impersonal temple, in which God is found and worshipped; nor is she simply the ground that was fertilised, the fleece on which rain or dew fell (see Ps 71 [72]:6; Judg 6:36–8) – she is not a passive instrument in God’s hands; she is God’s *partner* in the conception and birth of his Son. The Damascene, following tradition, brings this out, not only in his treatment of the Annunciation, but also in his treatment of the Conception of the Virgin and her Assumption. In his sermon on the Nativity of the Mother of God, John proclaims:

But why has the Virgin Mother been born from a sterile woman? For that which alone is new under the sun, the culmination of miracles, there had to be prepared a way by means of miracles and what was greater had to advance slowly from what was more humble. And I have another more exalted and divine reason. Nature has been defeated by grace and stands trembling, no longer ready to take the lead. Therefore when the God-bearing Virgin was about to be born from Anna, nature did not dare to anticipate the off-shoot of grace; instead it remained without fruit until grace sprouted its fruit. For it was necessary to her to be the first-born, she who would bear the ‘Firstborn of all creation’ in whom ‘all things subsist’ (*Nativ.M.* 2.1–10)¹⁵

A little later he announces:

Today the sterile gates are opened and a virginal, divine gate comes forth, from which and through which God, who is beyond all existing things, will enter ‘into the world’ ‘bodily’, according to Paul who heard ineffable things. Today a rod was begotten from the root of Jesse, out of which a divine flower will arise for the world. Today he, who once in ancient times established the firmament out of water and raised it up to the heights, has prepared heaven on earth out of earthly nature. For, truly, this <heaven> is much more divine and miraculous than that <firmament>. For the One, who at that time prepared the sun, arose from this <earthly nature> as a Sun of righteousness. (*Nativ.M.* 3.1–9)

The point of this concern for the conception, birth (and upbringing) of the one who is to be Mother of God is that her involvement in the divine economy is not passive, she must freely, personally, accept the divine invitation, which entails a simplicity and limpidity of will that cannot simply be presumed.

Similarly with the Assumption of the Mother of God. This is, as John makes clear in his homilies on the Dormition, especially the second, an entailment of the fact that the body formed in the womb of the Virgin is itself a source of life, ζωαρχικός, a term he doubtless owes to Dionysios the Areopagite, the

¹⁵ I have used, and slightly modified, Mary Cunningham’s translation of his sermon. This appears in M.B. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven: Eighth-Century Byzantine Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood NY, 2008), 53–70.

first theologian to reflect on the Dormition of the Mother of God.¹⁶ But if the body of the one the Virgin bore is ζωαρχικός, what must the Virgin's body itself be? What John asserts at length is expressed succinctly in the kontakion for the Feast: 'for as Mother of Life she has been taken over into life by him who dwelt in her ever-virgin womb'.¹⁷ But this is not a merely physical entailment, it is expressed in the whole longing and desire of the Mother of God on her deathbed. As the Damascene put it:

And it seems likely that she would have spoken thus: "Into your hands, my Son, I commend my spirit!" Receive the soul that is so dear to you, which you have preserved blameless. Yours is my body, too; I do not give it to the earth! Keep it safe, since you were pleased to dwell in it, and to preserve its virginity as you were being born. Bring me close to you, so that where you are, the fruit of my womb, I too may be, and may share your home. I am hastening towards you, who came to dwell so immediately in me. And you must console my dear children, whom you have been pleased to call your brothers and sisters, when I go away from them; add a blessing to the blessing I shall now give them by laying on my hands.' (*Dorm.* II.10.4–13)

And John represents the Lord replying to his mother in words drawn from the Song of Songs:

Come, my blessed Mother, 'into the place of my rest'.¹⁸ 'Arise, come, my dear one,' beautiful among all women; 'for the winter has past, and the time of pruning has come' (Song 2:10–12). 'My dear one is beautiful, and there is no blemish in you' (Cant 4:7). 'The odour of your ointments surpasses all fragrance' (Song 1:3; cf. 4:10).

St John Damascene is traditional in the way that he uses what I have called Christian *aggadah* and *halakah* as the source of his meditation on the Mother of God. What is also traditional is the reserve with which he uses the Christian 'aggadic' tradition: it is only the bare bones of the story that concern him, anything significant is justified by Christian doctrinal *halakah*. On the one occasion when he relates one of the stories in more detail – the account of the Jew who tried to seize the bier of the Mother of God – he almost apologises for mentioning it, calling it 'a bit of spice in a cooked dish': mere garnish, not the substance of the meal (*Dorm.* II.13). Indeed John seems to me to prefer, if not create, a new form of Christian *aggadah*, in which the narrative is filled out, not by detail to satisfy the curious, but by a doctrinal elaboration, presented in narrative form.

¹⁶ Dionysios the Areopagite, the judge of the Areopagos converted by Paul's speech in Athens (Acts 17:34), was the pseudonym taken by the author of a set of four treatises and ten letters, composed c. 530, that had a vast influence on Byzantine theology.

¹⁷ Translation taken from *The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom* (Oxford, 1995), 80. A kontakion, in modern use, is a short verse (troparion), used in the services of the Orthodox Church.

¹⁸ Ps 131 (132):8; cf. Ps 94 (95):11. Note that both these Psalm verses refer to the ark of the covenant as the place where God rests.

I want to close with the words about the Mother of God which he puts on the lips of Adam and Eve:

It was then, indeed, that Adam and Eve, the ancestors of our race, cried out piercingly, with joyful lips: 'Blessed are you, our daughter, for cancelling the punishment of our transgression! For you inherited from us a corruptible body, but you bore in your womb, for our sake, the garment of incorruptibility. You took your being from our loins, but you restored to us our well-being. You put an end to our travail, and broke through the swaddling-bands of death. You made available to us again our ancient home: we were the ones who locked Paradise, you the one who opened the way to the tree of life. Through our actions, sad times overtook good; but through yours, yet better times have come again out of sadness. How, then, shall you, the immaculate one, taste death? For you death will be the bridge to life, the stairway to heaven, the ford to the banks of immortality. Truly you are blessed, O most blessed one! For who has been offered in sacrifice but the Word himself, suffering all that we have learned he did?' (*Dorm.* II.8.1–13)

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The Use of the *Protevangelion of James* in Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God

Mary B. Cunningham

As Averil Cameron points out in her Introduction to this volume, the apocryphal text known as the *Protevangelion of James*, or sometimes as the 'Infancy Gospel',¹ remains something of a puzzle in the history of devotion to the Virgin Mary in the early Church.² Scholars have largely accepted the dating of this text to the middle or end of the second century on the basis of both Origen's and Clement of Alexandria's references to it in their writings.³ Further, the hypothesis that it is a composite work, which may have received additions in later centuries,⁴ has been convincingly refuted by E. de Strycker in his study and critical edition of the earliest manuscripts and versions of the *Protevangelion*.⁵ What is most striking about this text, which provided most of the inspiration for later liturgical and iconographical development of the story of the early life of the Virgin Mary, especially in the Byzantine and oriental Christian traditions, is that it stands so much on its own in the earliest period. As most scholars now agree, devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus, did not begin to receive formal expression in most liturgical or theological sources

¹ A critical edition of the *Protevangelion of James* may be found in E. de Strycker, S.J., *La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques. Recherches sur le Papyrus Bodmer 5 avec une édition critique du texte grec et une traduction annotée*, Subsidia Hagiographica 33 (Brussels, 1961). English translations exist in J.K. Elliott, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation Based on M.R. James* (Oxford, 1993; rev. edn 2004); R.J. Miller, ed., *The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version* (San Francisco, 3rd edn, 1994). For ease of reference, I will refer to Elliott's translation throughout this chapter.

² See Averil Cameron's Introduction to this volume.

³ Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17, in E. Klostermann and E. Benz, eds, GCS 40.1 (Leipzig, 1935), 21–2; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 7.16.93, O. Stählin, ed., vol. 2, GCS 52 (17) (Leipzig, 1906), 661.

⁴ This theory was propounded especially by A. Harnack in his monumental work, *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius* (Leipzig, 1897), vol. 1, 600–603.

⁵ De Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne*, esp. 12–13.

until approximately the beginning of the fourth century.⁶ It reached a high point after the affirmation of Mary as 'Theotokos' ('Birth-giver of God') at the council of Ephesos in 431, when preachers such as Proklos of Constantinople, Cyril of Alexandria, Hesychios of Jerusalem and others began to produce ornate, laudatory sermons in her honour.⁷ In the context of the late second century, however, the *Protevangelion* is unique among both canonical and apocryphal texts in its focus on the person of the Virgin Mary.⁸

The content of the *Protevangelion of James* suggests contemporary interest not only in the story of Mary's early life, but also in the purity that was required for her role as birth-giver and mother of Jesus Christ.⁹ Every detail in the narrative, including her parents' sterility and divinely assisted conception (echoing the stories of Old Testament prophets such as Isaac and Samuel),¹⁰ Anna's careful preservation of the child from any outside contamination in the sanctuary of her bedroom, and Mary's dedication to the temple at the age of three where she 'received food from the hand of an angel',¹¹ reinforces the central message of the text, namely that this female child is destined and worthy to become Jesus's mother. In addition, the author stresses Mary's virginity *in partu* with the story of the midwife Salome's examination of her

⁶ This question nevertheless remains controversial, with some proponents of an earlier beginning for the cult citing as evidence the John Rylands Papyrus 470. This fragment, which contains the intercessory Marian prayer known as 'Sub tuum praesidium', has been dated variously to the third or fourth centuries; see C.H. Roberts, *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester* (4 vols, Manchester, 1938), vol. 3: *Theological and Literary texts (nos. 457–551)*, 46–7, pl. 1; R. Price, 'Theotokos: the title and its significance in doctrine and devotion', in S.J. Boss, ed., *Mary. The Complete Resource* (London and New York, 2007), 56–7; S. Shoemaker, 'Marian liturgies and devotion in early Christianity', *ibid.*, 130–1. For overviews of early patristic treatment of the Virgin Mary, see L. Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church. The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought*, trans. T. Buffer (San Francisco CA, 1999); H. Graef, *Mary. A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (London, 1987).

⁷ Especially CPG 5248; 5800–4; 6569–70; for good editions and translations, see ACO, vol. 1, I.2, 102–4 (Cyril of Alexandria); N. Conzas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 2003), 128–272; M. Aubineau, *Les homélies festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem*, vol. 1, *Subsidia Hagiographica* 59 (Brussels, 1978), 158–68, 194–204. Other fifth-century preachers who wrote sermons in honour of the Virgin Mary include Basil of Seleucia, pseudo-Chrysostom, pseudo-Epiphanius etc. For an overview of the material, see R. Caro, *La homilética mariana en el siglo V*, *Marian Library Studies*, 3 vols (Dayton OH, 1971–73).

⁸ It is true that other early apocryphal texts do concern themselves with Mary or with the infancy of Christ, but none of these, as far as we can tell, focuses so exclusively on her. These texts include lost works such as the Gospels of the Hebrews or the Ebionites, as well as surviving texts such as the *Ascension of Isaiah*, and the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*. See C. Maunder, 'Mary in the New Testament and apocrypha', in Boss, ed., *Mary. The Complete Resource*, 11–46.

⁹ For further discussion of this early apocryphal material, see Andrew Louth's chapter, 'John of Damascus on the Mother of God as a link between humanity and God', in this volume (esp. 154–6).

¹⁰ See Gen 21; 1 Sam (1 Kings LXX) 1.

¹¹ *Protevangelion* 8.1; Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 60.

body after she has given birth to Christ.¹² Although contemporary readers, like their counterparts today, may have doubted the historical accuracy of the *Protevangelion*, it is likely that they knew that this is not the author's primary concern. This apocryphal narrative contains above all a theological message: basing itself, sometimes spuriously, on a Jewish midrashic tradition,¹³ the *Protevangelion* provides an exegetical elaboration of the infancy narratives found in Luke and Matthew. It furnishes background in relation not only to Mary's personal history, which is only hinted at in the canonical Gospels, but also to her exalted role within an already well developed understanding in the mainstream church of Christ as the Son of God. One further aspect of the *Protevangelion*, which deserves mention here, is the likelihood that it was composed against a background of controversy. The author's deliberate stress on the virgin birth may be apologetic, especially in response to pagan and Jewish critics of Christianity who may have questioned both Mary's virtue and the circumstances surrounding Christ's birth.¹⁴

Notwithstanding Origen's and Clement of Alexandria's awareness of the *Protevangelion*, it appears that early Fathers of the Church were reluctant to ascribe too much authority to an apocryphal text that departed significantly in its narrative from the canonical Gospels. Clement, when affirming Mary's virginity *in partu* on theological grounds, refers to the story of Salome with the qualification, 'as some say', but does not directly cite the *Protevangelion*.¹⁵ Apart from this, the only explicit reference to the text in early patristic literature is the detailed synopsis which appears in a commentary on Genesis, or *Hexaemeron*, ascribed to Eustathios of Antioch but probably composed by an anonymous author of the fourth or fifth century.¹⁶ If the Fathers' reception of the text was muted, it nevertheless circulated widely not only in Greek-speaking Christian communities from at least as early as the fourth century, but also in the oriental Churches.¹⁷ The *Protevangelion* was largely suppressed

¹² *Protevangelion* 20.1; Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 65.

¹³ See Louth's interpretation of the *Protevangelion* as belonging to the Rabbinic Judaic tradition of *aggadah*: above, 155. As Elliott points out in his introduction to the text, however, the author, while claiming to be James, step-brother of Jesus, displays ignorance not only of Palestinian geography but also of Jewish customs: the admission of Mary as a ward of the temple and above all her upbringing in the innermost sanctuary is the most obvious aberration. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 49.

¹⁴ See, for example, Origen's account of Celsus's charge (via a hypothetical Jew) that Jesus's mother was a woman who earned a living by spinning and was driven out of her home by her carpenter husband, Joseph, after being convicted of adultery. See Origen, *Contra Celsum* I.28; M. Borret, S.J., ed. and trans., *Origène. Contre Celse*, SC 132 (2 vols, Paris, 1967), vol. 1, 150–2; trans. H. Chadwick, *Origen. Contra Celsum* (Cambridge, 1953), 28. For further discussion of these issues, see J.K. Elliott, 'Mary in the apocryphal New Testament', in C. Maunder, ed., *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London and New York, 2008), esp. 59–60.

¹⁵ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 7.16.93.

¹⁶ CPG 3393, PG 18, cols 708–93, esp. 772–6; F. Zöpfl, *Der Kommentar des Pseudo-Eustathius zum Hexaemeron*, Alttestamentliche Abhandlungen X.5 (Münster, 1927).

¹⁷ A number of early witnesses including especially the Bodmer Papyrus V suggest diffusion in Greek as early as the fourth century; translations were from this

I want to close with the words about the Mother of God which he puts on the lips of Adam and Eve:

It was then, indeed, that Adam and Eve, the ancestors of our race, cried out piercingly, with joyful lips: 'Blessed are you, our daughter, for cancelling the punishment of our transgression! For you inherited from us a corruptible body, but you bore in your womb, for our sake, the garment of incorruptibility. You took your being from our loins, but you restored to us our well-being. You put an end to our travail, and broke through the swaddling-bands of death. You made available to us again our ancient home: we were the ones who locked Paradise, you the one who opened the way to the tree of life. Through our actions, sad times overtook good; but through yours, yet better times have come again out of sadness. How, then, shall you, the immaculate one, taste death? For you death will be the bridge to life, the stairway to heaven, the ford to the banks of immortality. Truly you are blessed, O most blessed one! For who has been offered in sacrifice but the Word himself, suffering all that we have learned he did?' (*Dorm.* II.8.1–13)

This sixth-century kontakion is an isolated piece of evidence, however. It is only by the eighth century, with the appearance of numerous homilies and hymns for the feast composed by writers including John of Damascus and Andrew of Crete, that we can be sure that this feast was being celebrated widely throughout the Byzantine empire and in Palestine.²³ This is also true of various other Marian feasts, including the Commemoration of Joachim and Anna (9 September),²⁴ and the feasts of Mary's Presentation into the Temple (21 November) and Conception by Anna (9 December). What is striking about all of the liturgical texts associated with these feasts, which began to be written from the early eighth century onward, is that they draw explicitly on the *Protevangelion* both for the narrative of Mary's early life and for theological inspiration. It would appear that by the early eighth century, at the latest, the *Protevangelion* had achieved full acceptance in the Byzantine liturgical and theological traditions. The acceptance of apocryphal texts on the Dormition of the Virgin also occurred in the late sixth and early seventh century, at about the same time that the emperor Maurice introduced this feast into the liturgical calendar.²⁵ Preachers such as John of Thessalonike, Modestos of Jerusalem and Theoteknos of Livias employed various narratives that were circulating at this time, apparently accepting them as part of a holy, if non-canonical, tradition.²⁶

mid-sixth-century date for the introduction of the feast of Mary's Nativity into the calendar. See, for example, *ODB*, vol. 1, 291; T. Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI* (Leiden, 1997), 163, n. 5. Other scholars, however, are more cautious: Averil Cameron has suggested that the feast was introduced into the calendar by Justin II. See her 'Images of authority: élites and icons in late sixth-century Byzantium', *Past and Present* 84 (1979), 18. J. Grosdidier de Matons refrains from associating Romanos's kontakion with a newly instituted feast of Mary's Nativity, suggesting instead that the latter may have been introduced into the calendar by the emperor Maurice, at the same time that he instituted the feast of her Dormition. See J. Grosdidier de Matons, 'Liturgie et hymnographie: kontakion et canon', *DOP* 24/25 (1980–81), 39. See also J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'Iconography of the cycle of the life of the Virgin', in P. Underwood, ed., *The Kariye Djami. Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background* (4 vols, London, 1975), vol. 4, 164.

²³ For a recent English translation of these homilies, with commentary, see M.B. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven: Eighth-Century Byzantine Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood NY, 2008).

²⁴ This commemoration, which is still celebrated in the Orthodox Church, has never been regarded as a full-fledged feast. It is sometimes termed a 'Begleitfest' or 'accompanying feast'; sometimes such commemorations follow a day after the main festival – in this case, the Nativity of the Virgin Mary which is celebrated on 8 September. See A. Baumstark, 'Begleitfeste', *RAC* 2 (1954), 78–92; D. Krausmüller, 'Making the most of Mary: the cult of the Virgin in the Chalkoprateia from Late Antiquity to the tenth century', below, 228 and n. 51.

²⁵ According to the fourteenth-century historian Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, the feast of the Dormition, on 15 August, was instituted during Maurice's reign (582–602). See his *Hist. Eccl.* 17.28, PG 147, col. 292. On the various traditions that exist among the Dormition accounts, see, most recently, S. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford, 2002).

²⁶ See B.E. Daley, S.J., trans., *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies*

Turning now to the treatment of the *Protevangelion* in eighth-century Byzantine festal sermons, I propose to examine those texts which explicitly draw on the second-century apocryphal narrative in their celebration of the recently, or relatively recently, instituted feasts of Mary's Conception, Nativity and Presentation into the Temple. As I suggested above, detailed discussion of these themes had not been undertaken in liturgical texts prior to this period, with the exception of Romanos's kontakion on the Nativity of the Virgin. Nor, at least to my knowledge, has any study of the use of the *Protevangelion* in eighth-century Marian homilies yet appeared.²⁷ In the discussion that follows, I shall examine the use of the *Protevangelion* with regard to the three above-mentioned feasts in the works of five eighth-century preachers: Andrew of Crete, John of Damascus, Germanos of Constantinople, John of Euboea and Kosmas Vestitor. Within such festal contexts, various aspects of these authors' methods of literary referencing will be traced, including their use of the *Protevangelion* narrative, allusion to its theological meaning and development of certain typological themes.

To begin with the feast of Anna's Conception of Virgin Mary, one homily by a relatively obscure but undoubtedly mid-eighth-century preacher, John of Euboea, survives.²⁸ That this sermon was intended specifically for the feast of the Conception is stated clearly by the author in a passage describing *ten* major feasts in the liturgical year, of which this is the first – at least in terms of the revelatory news of the Incarnation that they proclaim:

First of all the notable feasts is that in which Joachim and Anna received the good news of the [approaching] birth of the wholly undefiled and God-bearing Mary. And after this, [there comes] her all-sacred Nativity. There was her Conception; here her Nativity.²⁹

In one section of the homily, John calls on his audience to recall the story of Joachim and Anna, summarising briefly the couple's grief in infertility, prayers to God and the miraculous conception that followed.³⁰ In his

(Crestwood NY, 1998).

²⁷ I am basing this preliminary investigation on work carried out at the University of Birmingham, with AHRC funding, between 2003 and 2006, the published results of which include this volume and Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*.

²⁸ CPG 8135; PG 96, cols 1460–1500.

²⁹ John of Euboea, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, cols 1473–4; the translation of this homily, as with others quoted in this chapter, is my own. See Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 182. It is noteworthy that John identifies ten major feasts, including both Dominical and Marian, in this homily. The list also seems eccentric, in that it includes the feast of the Conception, but excludes Palm Sunday and the Dormition. It is possible that this reflects the preacher's provincial background and the variations in liturgical practice that still existed in the early eighth century. For discussions of John of Euboea's possible provenance, which has been placed by scholars either in Greece or in Syria, see F. Dölger, 'Iohannes von Euboea', *AnalBoll* 68 (1950), 5–26; F. Halkin, 'La passion de Ste Parascève par Jean d'Eubée', in P. Wirth, ed., *Polychronion. Festschrift für Franz Dölger* (Heidelberg, 1966), 231–7.

³⁰ One of the odd features of this homily is that the preacher frequently digresses

treatment of the narrative found in the *Protevangelion*, the preacher stresses above all its dramatic nature, using a number of rhetorical devices in order to heighten the affective power of his oration. Thus he begins by exclaiming, 'Behold Joachim and Anna! ... Behold the good news of happiness in a garden ...!',³¹ before going on to retell the story of their separate annunciations with emphasis on the emotional development of each character. John's interest in Anna is particularly striking in this homily. Commenting on Anna's actions after Joachim leaves the house to pray in the wilderness for forty days, the preacher writes:

Then Anna, on contemplating her spouse's delay, began to mourn to herself with a gentle lament and to say, 'What is [the meaning of] this withdrawal of my dearest husband?' or 'What is the meaning of this delay?' As I see it, it is not good ... But why shall I mourn, unless I am both a widow and childless? If I did have a shoot, I would not feel such pain concerning the root. If the man whom I desired from my youth were now present, there would be some expectation even with regard to the shoot. Alas, what am I to do? ... [How] shall I mourn you as a corpse? I have not seen your tomb! Or am I to wait, as if you had departed to a distant land? But no one has reported to me that he has found my lord. Alas, who will report to me where my partner and consort is; where the descendant and follower of Abraham is?³²

In his attempt to cause the congregation – and perhaps especially the female members of that congregation – to identify with Anna, John invents a monologue in which she expresses despair, doubt, and strong affection for her absent husband. This is followed by passages in which the preacher alternately utters exclamations of praise to the holy couple, embarks on exegetical excursions on biblical names or events suggested by the text, and pursues his exploration of Anna's and Joachim's emotional reactions to the promise of a child. He finishes this section of the homily with the lines:

Then, when the righteous Joachim also received the good news of the conception from his loins, he began to prepare doubly and triply the [expressions] of joy, and, multiplying these tenfold, he rejoiced and exulted. And indeed, when he had fulfilled everything according to his custom, offering gifts and sacrifices, the sterile woman conceived. And both awaited the fruit of the birth, whatever the outcome might be.³³

from his main topic, discussing Old Testament figures such as Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob, whom he denounces as one who defiled his father's bed (Gen 49:4). This reference is inspired by the fact that his namesake is the Jew who stood up and told Joachim that, because of his sterility, he could not offer gifts to the temple. *Protevangelion* 1.2, Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 57.

³¹ John of Euboia, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, col. 1465; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 176.

³² John of Euboia, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, col. 1472; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 180.

³³ John of Euboia, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, col. 1480; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 184–5.

After the account of Mary's conception and birth, John of Euboeia turns his attention to the story, also recounted in the *Protevangelion*, of her dedication to the temple.³⁴ It is in this section of the homily that the preacher decides to focus his attention on number symbolism and typology in his interpretation of the second-century apocryphal account. The symbolism involving numbers builds on an element that is already present, albeit in a less developed form, in the *Protevangelion*.³⁵ Commenting on the fact that Mary was taken to the temple at the age of three, John concludes that this choice was symbolic of the Trinity. After this, he embarks on a comparison of Mary, the living temple, and the temple that was constructed of stone. This also evokes Psalm 44 (45) and the image of the princess with her virgins being brought into the presence of the king,³⁶ a text which became firmly associated with the Presentation of the Mother of God in the temple in both homilies and hymns hereafter, as we shall see later.

It is interesting to note, with regard to this earliest surviving homily on the feast of the Conception of the Virgin Mary, that most of the elements that would continue to feature in sermons on this subject are already present. These include the dramatic development of the *Protevangelion* story, with invented monologue and dialogue, exploration of Old Testament types that prefigure these events, and intertextual exegesis based especially on the books of the prophets and on the Psalms. Other characteristic features of John of Euboeia's preaching style are also evident in this homily, such as his tendency to embark on involved, and occasionally obscure, excursions into biblical byways and his taste for both vivid ekphrasis and anti-Judaic polemic. Above all, for the purposes of this chapter, we should note John's reliance on the *Protevangelion* as the authoritative source for the events being celebrated in this feast.

A similar confidence in employing the *Protevangelion* is evident in the more numerous sermons on the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary that survive from the early eighth century. These texts include the sermon attributed to John of Damascus³⁷ and four others, three of which belong to a trilogy that was probably preached during one all-night vigil, composed by Andrew of Crete.³⁸ Each of these sermons treats the theme of the feast somewhat differently and some make more use of the *Protevangelion* than do others.

³⁴ It is not uncommon in Marian homilies of this period to find preachers dealing with more themes than simply those suggested by the feast. See also Andrew of Crete, *In nativitate* I, PG 97, esp. col. 820, in which he also deals with the theme of Mary's Presentation into the temple.

³⁵ H. Graef comments on the use of number symbolism in the *Protevangelion*. See Graef, *Mary. A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, 36.

³⁶ John of Euboeia, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, col. 1481.

³⁷ CPG 8060; B. Kotter, ed., *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, Patristische Texte und Studien 7, 12, 17, 22, 29 (5 vols, Berlin and New York, 1969–88), vol. 5, 149–50; P. Voulet, S. Jean Damascène, *Homélie sur la nativité et la dormition*, SC 80 (Paris, 1961), 46–78; trans. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 53–70.

³⁸ CPG 8170–3; ed. PG 97, cols 805–81; trans. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 71–138.

John of Damascus's sermon on the Nativity is a masterpiece of oratorical eloquence, celebrating this momentous event as 'the nativity of joy for the whole world'.³⁹ Although this homily focuses more on the theological significance of the feast than on the narrative of the *Protevangelion*, it alludes repeatedly to the apocryphal text as it extols the integrity and virtue of Mary's parents, Joachim and Anna, and celebrates her birth. It is striking, from a theological point of view, that the author stresses both the paradoxical and natural aspects of the conception. In the first section of the homily, John writes:

But why has the Virgin Mother been born from a sterile woman? For that which alone is new under the sun, the culmination of miracles, the way had to be prepared by means of miracles, and what was greater had to advance slowly from what was more humble. And I have another more exalted and divine reason. Nature has been defeated by grace and stands trembling, no longer ready to take the lead. Therefore when the God-bearing Virgin was about to be born from Anna, nature did not dare to anticipate the off-shoot of grace; instead it remained without fruit until grace sprouted its fruit.⁴⁰

In describing the conception and birth of the Virgin, however, the preacher also focuses on the completely natural process of sexual reproduction that took place when Joachim and Anna came together after their miraculous annunciations:

O most all-blessed loins of Joachim, from which a wholly unblemished seed was sent forth! O renowned womb of Anna, in which slowly, with additions from her, an all-holy infant grew and once it had taken shape, was born!⁴¹

This passage, which reflects the ancient and medieval belief that the embryo grows from the male sperm with 'additions', in the form of blood, being added slowly by the mother, deliberately emphasises Mary's link with the rest of the human race.⁴² This preoccupation is echoed in Andrew of Crete's first homily on her Nativity, in which he writes, even more graphically:

So the power that never lingers came quite soon to those who implored and entreated the divine being. It stimulated him into fruitfulness and

³⁹ The authenticity of this homily is in dispute. See Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, 149–50; A. Louth, *St John Damascene. Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford, 2002), 226; J.M. Hoeck, 'Stand und Aufgaben der Damaskenos-Forschung', *OCP* 17 (1951), 37, n. 84. Like Andrew Louth (see also his chapter in this volume), I am inclined to accept the homily as authentic.

⁴⁰ John of Damascus, *In nativitate*, Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, 170.2; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 54.

⁴¹ John of Damascus, *In nativitate*, Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, 170.2; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 54–5.

⁴² On patristic and Byzantine views of conception and childbirth, see now L. Brusson, M.-H. Congourdeau and J.-L. Solère, eds, *L'embryon: formation et animation. Antiquité grecque et latine. Traditions hébraïque, chrétienne et islamique*, Histoire des doctrines de l'antiquité classique 38 (Paris, 2008).

her into producing a child; and having meanwhile sprinkled the withered passages of the reproductive organs with the juices of sperm production, it brought them from infertility into productivity.⁴³

The link between Mary's natural conception and birth and the celebration of these events by nature itself is also emphasised in many homilies on her Nativity. Andrew of Crete, for example, writes in celebration of the human Incarnation of Christ, which began with the birth of the Virgin, as follows:

Therefore let all things rejoice together today and let nature skip: 'Let heaven rejoice above and let the clouds rain righteousness!' (Is 45:8); let the mountains drop sweetness and the hills exultation! (Cf. Amos 9:13; Joel 3:14) ... Let every right-judging soul therefore now dance, and let nature invite creation to its own renewal and remaking!⁴⁴

Such imagery is reminiscent of the language used in both the Psalms and the prophetic books of the Old Testament. Byzantine preachers employed an intertextual form of exegesis which linked the panentheism, or belief in God's presence throughout creation, that is expressed throughout the Old Testament with Chalcedonian Christological doctrine. In addition to this, the exuberance and emotion that characterises Middle Byzantine festal sermons is striking.⁴⁵

Another aspect of eighth-century homiletic exegesis of the *Protevangelion* is the emphasis on the virtue and good lineage of Joachim and Anna. The reasons for this are obvious: in order to be worthy of her forthcoming status as Mother of God, Mary's parentage should be above reproach. Both Andrew of Crete and John of Damascus refer to the genealogies found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in order to show that not only Joachim, but also Anna, are descended from the prophet David. In addition to this, however, they celebrate both parents' righteousness and purity. To take one example, John of Damascus exclaims with characteristic emotional vigour:

O most chaste pair of rational turtle-doves, Joachim and Anna! Having kept the law of nature, chastity, you were deemed worthy of things that surpass nature; you have given birth for the world to a Mother of God who knows no husband. Having conducted yourselves piously and blessedly in human nature, you have now given birth to a daughter who surpasses angels and has dominion over the angels. O most beautiful and sweet little daughter! O lily among thorns engendered from a most noble and regal Davidic root! ... Blessed are the loins and the womb from which you sprouted forth! Blessed are the arms that carried you and the lips which tasted your pure kisses – the lips only of your parents that you might always be a virgin in every way!⁴⁶

⁴³ Andrew of Crete, *In nativitatem* I, PG 97, col. 816; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 79–80.

⁴⁴ Andrew of Crete, *In natitatem* I, PG 97, col. 809; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 74.

⁴⁵ For further confirmation of this, see N. Tsironis, 'Emotion and the senses in Marian homilies of the Middle Byzantine period', below, 179–96.

⁴⁶ John of Damascus, *In nativitatem* 6, Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, 174–5;

Although Joachim and Anna are not mentioned in the canonical New Testament, their status at the top of the hierarchy of saints, as 'the holy and righteous forebears of God',⁴⁷ is implicit in these sermons.

One writer whose work remains somewhat neglected by scholars, in spite of his importance as one of the few lay preachers in the Byzantine world, is Kosmas Vestitor, who may have flourished sometime between the middle of the eighth and ninth centuries.⁴⁸ Five Marian homilies are attributed to Kosmas: while one commemorates Joachim and Anna,⁴⁹ the other four, which survive only in Latin, are dedicated to the feast of the Dormition.⁵⁰ Kosmas, like his contemporaries, makes ample use of the *Protevangelion* in his sermon honouring Mary's parents. The preacher makes it clear that this oration is intended for the lesser feast, or *Begleitfest*, that was already being celebrated on 9 September, one day after the Nativity of the Virgin.⁵¹ Thus Kosmas writes in his prologue:

Yesterday the Nativity festival of the Theotokos glorified the celebration of cosmic joy for us with auspicious hymnody. Today is the day that offers thanksgiving to the progenitors of the Theotokos, through whom the beginning of salvation for all has come about. Indeed, the festival of the parents is that of the daughter. For just as a child is glorified too in the glory of its mother, so also is a mother glorified in the blessing of a child. Yesterday thus was a day that was 'wonderful in our eyes', (cf. Ps 117 [118]:23), and today there is happiness in remembering the righteous with speeches of praise.⁵²

Kosmas's homily on Sts Joachim and Anna focuses primarily on these holy figures, using the information provided in the *Protevangelion*. After the prologue, followed by a section of narrative, Kosmas offers greetings in the form of *chairetismoï*, or the standard 'hail' formulation, to the saintly progenitors, employing poetic images such as 'oystershell of the spotless pearl', 'pure emerald' and 'water-jug for the thirst of child-bearing'.⁵³ Another interesting aspect of Kosmas's treatment of the *Protevangelion* is his emphasis

Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 60–1.

⁴⁷ These are the words in which Joachim and Anna are commemorated in the final prayer of the divine liturgy according to John Chrysostom. See text and translation in *The Divine Liturgy of Our Father Among the Saints John Chrysostom* (Oxford, 1995), 51.

⁴⁸ On Kosmas Vestitor, see *ODB*, vol. 2, 1153; A. Wenger, *L'Assomption de la très sainte Vierge dans la tradition Byzantine du VIe aux IXe siècle* (Paris, 1955), 315–33.

⁴⁹ CPG 8151; PG 106, cols 1005–12; trans. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 139–44.

⁵⁰ CPG 8155–8; ed. Wenger, *L'Assomption de la t.s. Vierge*, 315–33.

⁵¹ Kosmas's homily represents the first liturgical text in honour of this *Begleitfest*; by the tenth century, it is recorded in the *Typikon* of the Great Church of Constantinople: see J. Mateos, ed., *Le Typicon de la Grande Église: Ms. Sainte-Croix no. 40, Xe siècle* (2 vols, Rome, 1962), vol. 1, 126.4–2; see also D. Krausmüller, 'Making the most of Mary: the cult of the Virgin in the Chalkoprateia from Late Antiquity to the tenth century', below, 228.

⁵² Kosmas Vestitor, *In Ioachim et Annam parentes deiparae*, PG 106, col. 1005; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 139.

⁵³ Kosmas Vestitor, *In Ioachim et Annam*, PG 106, col. 1009; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 142.

on the goodness of the marriage, or partnership, of Joachim and Anna. The preacher portrays this in a down-to-earth manner, suggesting the couple's daily sharing of sorrow and joy, and contrasting Anna with her wayward ancestor Eve:

For [Anna] was ... joined to her husband as a helper both in the living out of virtues and in daily supplications to God. For the two grew equally weary in their prayer of yearning for a child in same way that a farmer, together with his wife, when they have worked some barren land, sow the seed and, through prayer, expect to gain a good crop of fruit. [Anna lived] not as Eve lived with Adam, but as one who shared in thanksgiving and worked with [Joachim] on spiritual good deeds; and she was truly a 'better half' who completed the union with her husband perfectly. For whereas Eve became the producer of pain for the world by means of the fruit of a tree, Joachim's Anna represented joy for the creator by means of the fruit of her womb ...⁵⁴

Turning to the feast of the Presentation into the Temple, it is important to note that the two sermons which are attributed to Germanos of Constantinople may be the first liturgical texts to be composed for this feast.⁵⁵ Although it has been argued that the feast was introduced into the Constantinopolitan calendar during the reign of Justinian,⁵⁶ it is safer in the absence of other liturgical evidence to conclude that it appeared nearly two centuries later, sometime around the beginning of the eighth century.⁵⁷ The *Protevangelion* supplies the narrative for this feast, as it does for those of Mary's Conception and Nativity. Preachers and hymnographers from the eighth century onward embroidered this narrative, however, with typology, expounding especially the type of the 'temple' for the Virgin Mary, dramatic narrative and allusions to the Psalms. The subject invites meditation on the theme of Mary's sanctity, as she is prepared for her future role as the holy and pure receptacle of God himself.

Leaving aside the question of authenticity with regard to the two sermons on the Presentation into the Temple that are attributed to Germanos,⁵⁸ we

⁵⁴ Kosmas Vestitor, *In Ioachim et Annam*, PG 106, col. 1008; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 140.

⁵⁵ CPG 8007–8; PG 98, cols 292–320; trans. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 145–72.

⁵⁶ See, for example, M. Barker, 'Justinian's "New Church" and the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple', *Sourozh* 103 (February 2006), 15–33.

⁵⁷ See S. Vailhé, 'La fête de la présentation de Marie au temple', *EO* 5 (1901–2), 221–4; Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge*, vol. 1, 28–30. The main argument against earlier adoption of the feast into the calendar is the fact that it is not mentioned in the surviving Jerusalemite liturgical calendars. These include Renoux, *Le codex arménien Jérusalem 121*, PO 35–36 (Turnhout, 1969–71), the Georgian redactions dating from the fifth–eighth centuries, ed. M. Tarnnischvili, *Le grand lectionnaire de l'église de Jérusalem*, CSCO 205, Scriptorum Iberici 14 (2 vols, Louvain, 1960), and the sixth-century Syriac lectionary of the Old Testament and Epistle lections, ed. A.S. Lewis, *A Palestinian Syriac Lectionary* (London, 1897). See also Krausmüller, 'Making the most of Mary', below, 228–30.

⁵⁸ Although scholars such as H.-G. Beck have accepted the authenticity of both

may merely note here that they exhibit differences in both style and content. Whereas the first sermon is written in a higher style, with lengthy periods and frequent neologisms, the second is more characteristic of the elevated *koine* literary style that characterises most of the patriarch's homiletic output. The content of the first sermon is also more panegyric and theological than that of the second, which focuses more on the narrative and dramatic aspects of the apocryphal story. Finally, it is striking that the second work, like many other early eighth-century Marian festal homilies, strays from the topic of the feast in order to cover other elements in the story including the conception and birth of the Virgin. The first sermon meanwhile focuses more directly on the feast of the Presentation into the temple, using typology, prophecy and poetic imagery in order to emphasise both Mary's preparation and forthcoming role as the 'living temple' of God. One other early eighth-century text, Andrew of Crete's first sermon on the Nativity of the Mother of God, also treats the theme of her Presentation into the temple in its concluding section.⁵⁹ Here the preacher focuses primarily on retelling the narrative of the *Protevangelion* although, like Germanos, he emphasises the theological implications of this consecration of God's new 'living temple'.

It is worth examining the dramatic treatment of the *Protevangelion* narrative, especially in Germanos's second sermon on the Presentation. This sermon emphasises the emotional reactions of the personages involved in the story, including Anna and the high priest Zacharias, on receiving the holy infant. After describing the procession to the temple, accompanied by virgins carrying torches (recalling Ps 43 [44]), the preacher invents a dialogue between Anna and Zacharias in which the latter questions Mary's mother about her family background and reasons for bringing her daughter to the temple. Anna responds with a full account of her despair on being found infertile, prayers to God and happiness at the miraculous conception, and finally, her decision to offer the female child to God. Zacharias then utters words of joy and praise, invented by the preacher not only to display his personal reaction to the event, but also its theological significance in the history of God's dispensation:

On hearing these words, Zacharias at once answered Anna, [saying], 'Blessed is your root, all-honoured one! Glorified is your womb, one beloved by your husband! Most glorious is your offering, lover of God!' Then, holding the child with great joy, he eagerly brought her into the holy of holies, perhaps saying words such as these to her, 'Come, fulfilment of my prophecy! Come, completion of the promises of God! Come, seal of his covenant! Come, achievement of his purposes! Come, manifestation of his mysteries!' ...⁶⁰

homilies, both D. Krausmüller and I have expressed doubts. See H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), 474–5; Krausmüller, 'Making the most of Mary', below, 229 and n. 57; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 39.

⁵⁹ CPG 8170; PG 97, cols 805–20, esp. col. 820.

⁶⁰ Germanos, *In praesentationem* II, PG 98, col. 316; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 168–9.

Neither this text, nor the first sermon on the Presentation attributed to Germanos, neglects the symbolic or typological aspects of the story. Some exegetical details are developed here for the first time; others had already been employed in sermons commemorating other Marian feasts. In the first sermon on the Presentation, for example, Germanos develops the Trinitarian connotations of the number three, as mentioned in the *Protevangelion* account of Mary's Presentation and already cited, as we saw above, in John of Euboiá's homily on her Conception. Here the Virgin's age of three evokes the three stones used by David to slay Goliath (1 Kings [1 Sam] 17:40),⁶¹ the three days spent by Jonah in the whale's belly (Jonah 1:17), the three children in the furnace (Dan 3:20–7), and so on. Above all, however, the preacher alludes to the Trinity, in which three persons are 'joined wholly consubstantially as by a perfect number in unconfused, or collected, unity...'.⁶² This sermon also develops the typology of Mary as temple, citing not only the second temple into which she was received, but also the temple with the sealed gate 'through which no man shall enter' except the Lord (Ezek 44:1–3). Mary, the new, virginal or sealed, temple who is 'wider than the heavens'⁶³ would in due course contain God himself. The transition from the lifeless temple of the old dispensation to the living temple of the new is emphasised in the lines:

Today the holy table of the temple begins to be made splendid, having assumed the transfer to bloodless sacrifices by participation and the sweetest embrace of the heavenly and life-sustaining bread from a table of divine veneration. Today she alone is dedicated to the place of propitiation for the floods of errors that have overthrown mortals, being called a new, most godlike, cleansing place of propitiation that is not made by hands.⁶⁴

Here, as in sermons on other Marian feasts, the types may be used interchangeably: the Theotokos is not only 'temple', but also the 'holy table' or altar which contains the life-giving bread, Christ. At the end of this sermon, as in the case of some other texts of the same genre, a series of *chairetismoi* provides other images and types for the Virgin. She is the 'shining cloud that lets fall drops of spiritual, divine dew on us', 'the new Sion and divine Jerusalem', the 'most fat and shaded mountain', 'the holy throne of God' and so on.⁶⁵ While these are standard types for the Virgin Mary, the preacher adapts them in each case to the theme of this feast, stating, for example,

⁶¹ Whereas the Septuagint actually gives five as the number of stones chosen by David, Byzantine iconography normally portrays him with three, perhaps because of the Trinitarian symbolism. See R. Cormack, *Byzantine Art* (Oxford, 2000), 65, pl. 36

⁶² Germanos, *In praesentationem* I, PG 98, col. 296; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 150.

⁶³ Germanos, *In praesentationem* I, PG 98, col. 293; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 147.

⁶⁴ Germanos, *In praesentationem* I, PG 98, col. 293; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 147.

⁶⁵ Germanos, *In praesentationem* I, PG 98, cols 305–8; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 159–60.

that the 'mountain of God' produced a rock 'that was cut without hands ... which crushed idolatrous altars and became the head of the corner that was wonderful in our eyes'.⁶⁶ Old places of worship, which could here refer either to the Jewish temple in which Mary was reared or to idolatrous pagan sanctuaries, have collectively given way to the new church that is founded in Christ, the cornerstone or 'rock cut without hands' (cf. Eph 2:20; Dan 2:34).

This brief exploration of eighth-century preachers' use of the *Protevangelion* of James in their homiletic treatment of the newly instituted Marian feasts must suffice within the confines of the present chapter.⁶⁷ Let us now recapitulate some of the issues that have been raised, and attempt to draw some conclusions. Firstly, it is clear that the *Protevangelion* features prominently in eighth-century sermons honouring feasts that the apocryphal text itself inspired. After centuries in which the *Protevangelion* was widely known, but rarely cited explicitly by Church Fathers, preachers and hymnographers appear to have accepted it wholeheartedly as a part of holy tradition, if not as canonical Scripture. Their use of the text ranges from narrative exegesis, with dramatic development of the story that it contains, to various forms of theological and symbolic interpretation. In this chapter I have confined my analysis to sermons on the Conception, Nativity, and Presentation of the Mother of God in the temple; the influence of the *Protevangelion* relates as well, however, to other feasts such as the Annunciation (to which the apocryphal text adds details such as Mary's visit to the well and spinning of threads for the curtain of the temple just before Gabriel approaches her) and the Nativity of Christ (which occurred in a cave and was attended by the midwife Salome).

It is well known that the *Protevangelion of James* influenced later Byzantine hymnography and art;⁶⁸ what is not yet understood is when and why the text began to be adopted into mainstream liturgical tradition.⁶⁹ Earlier in this chapter, I suggested that liturgical writers, beginning with Romanos the Melode, turned to apocryphal tradition when asked to celebrate Marian feasts that had no basis in Scripture. Another possible explanation might be

⁶⁶ Germanos, *In praesentationem* I, PG 98, col. 308; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 160.

⁶⁷ I hope in future studies to extend this analysis further, along with examination of other aspects of Middle Byzantine Marian sermons.

⁶⁸ See Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'Iconography of the cycle of the life of the Virgin'; *eadem*, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'Empire byzantin et en Occident*, Mémoires de la Classe des Beaux-Arts, Académie Royale de Belgique (Brussels, 1964), vol. 11, fasc. 3; G. Babić, 'Sur l'iconographie de la composition "Nativité de la Vierge" dans la peinture Byzantine', *ZRVI* 7 (1961), 169–75; X. Jacob, 'La vie de Marie interprétée par les artistes des églises rupestres de Cappadoce', *Cahiers de l'art medieval* 6.1 (1971–73), 15–30.

⁶⁹ An interesting hypothesis to keep in mind in this context is Niki Tsironis's suggestion that particular themes, such as Mary's motherly qualities, were introduced first in poetry, then in homiletics, then iconography, and finally liturgy. See N. Tsironis, 'From poetry to liturgy: the cult of the Virgin in the Middle Byzantine period', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), 91–9.

that interest in apocryphal texts such as the *Protevangelion* was sparked by growing devotion to the Virgin Mary as a holy figure in her own right.⁷⁰ The institution of feasts in her honour might, if the latter theory is correct, have occurred more as a *result* of the growing cult than as a *cause* for increasing interest in its textual sources.

We must also ask whether Romanos the Melode, with his *kontakion* on the Nativity of the Virgin, acted as a catalyst in this process, thus influencing later preachers and hymnographers as significantly in this respect as he did in many others.⁷¹ There can be no question that, after the primarily Christological emphasis of fifth-century homilies and hymns on the Virgin Mary, a new interest in her personal qualities and history, emotions, and intercessory power emerged in the course of the sixth century. Romanos represents an important link in this process, although other liturgical writers, as Pauline Allen has shown, also reveal changing perceptions of the Theotokos in their texts.⁷² Finally, however, while noting the increasing emphasis on the Virgin Mary and the liturgical use of the *Protevangelion* and other apocryphal texts from the sixth century onward, it is important to recognise that this continued to be interpreted in the light of the Christological doctrine that had been formulated in the course of the fifth century. Festal sermons and hymns continued throughout the Byzantine period to emphasise, by means of argument, imagery and typology, the Virgin's essential role in the Incarnation of Christ. This central teaching dominates liturgical interpretation not only of Scripture, but also of apocryphal texts such as the *Protevangelion of James* and the Dormition accounts. At the same time, as we have seen, it remains possible for preachers to explore the personalities and motivations of Mary and her parents, Joachim and Anna. Thus, eternal and cosmic meanings embrace the personal: this is the essence, after all, of the Christological paradox.

⁷⁰ See A. Cameron, 'Images of authority: élites and icons', 3–31; *eadem*, 'The Theotokos in sixth-century Constantinople. A city finds its symbol', *JTS*, n.s. 29 (1978), 79–108. A more recent overview may be found in B.V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park PA, 2006), esp. 11–103.

⁷¹ For approaches to this question, see J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance* (Paris, 1977), 48–65; M.B. Cunningham, 'The reception of Romanos in Middle Byzantine homiletics and hymnography', *DOP* 62 (2008), 251–60.

⁷² P. Allen, 'Portrayals of Mary in Greek homiletic literature (6th–7th centuries)', above, esp. 72–84.

Emotion and the Senses in Marian Homilies of the Middle Byzantine period

Niki Tsironis

The bronze statue of a pregnant woman, executed by Damien Hirst, the so-called 'prophet of Britart',¹ and leading figure of the YBA (Young British Artists) conceptual art movement, dominated the sight of the viewer entering the courtyard of the Royal Academy of Arts in London in August 2006. The title at the feet of the statue read 'The Virgin Birth'. The body was divided into two. The right-hand side showed a naked female pregnant body. The left-hand side revealed what lay under the skin: the skull of the woman, the mammary gland (covered by the nipples) as well as a vertical cross-section of the womb allowing a view of the baby inside. At the level of the thigh, the body was stripped of its flesh and the muscles were exposed. Most probably the artist aimed at shocking the viewer and he has successfully done so.² One question the viewer would ask himself is whether the person depicted was to be identified with Mary. Its title suggests that this was, indeed, a modern reading of the Virgin birth that showed a deconstructed Virgin of startling physicality. Was this phenomenon a reflection of society's need to strip all mystery of its sanctity?

The veiled Mother of God of the East and the ethereal Madonna of the West suggest that the figure of Mary has always followed *l'air du temps*, reflecting the currents of thought and taste of its era. Similarly, Hirst's deconstructed Mary follows the current of the modern day by setting the body of the Virgin against the backdrop of a deconstructed society. The exposure of the

¹ *Independent Digital*, 11 October 2002, <http://dh.ryoshuu.com/press/2002usborn.html> For the presentation of the work and photo see: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/5004844.stm>

² The YBA (Young British Artists) and Hirst in particular are known for their shock tactics. See, for example, comments posted in <http://ionarts.blogspot.com/2006/06/damien-hirst-virgin-mother.html>, such as, 'Part of the shock of this piece is its anatomical focus, something like a vivisection, amplified by its massive scale.' See also the intuitive study of Juliet Koss, 'On the limits of empathy', *The Art Bulletin* 88:1 (2006), 139–57 and esp. 139–42.

muscular system and skull of Mary is meant to strip her of the mystery that has wrapped the word and image of the Incarnation of the Logos from the first Christian centuries to our era.

In the present chapter we shall go back to the time when writers and artists alike vested the body of the Virgin in clothes and images; a time when they focused on the evocation of the emotion and the senses of the audience. Ioli Kalavrezou, in her pioneering essay 'When the Virgin Mary became *Meter Theou*', has pointed out the shift that occurs in the ninth century in the depiction of the profile of the Virgin.³ Since then, numerous studies of the cult of the Virgin have confirmed her suggestions about the way in which the majestic, imperial profile of the Virgin, evident in pre-iconoclastic representations such as the enthroned Virgin and child in the Euphrasiana Basilica in Poreč,⁴ or the famous Sinai encaustic icon, was replaced by the tender, emotional Virgin in the period following the Triumph of Orthodoxy.⁵ Admittedly, emotion and the senses occupy a much more central place in the literature of the iconoclastic period in comparison with earlier literary works dedicated to the Virgin. In the past I have attempted a comparison between the work of the fifth-century homilist Proklos of Constantinople and writers of the iconoclastic period, with special emphasis on the work of Kassia the hymnographer.⁶ A close reading of the respective works showed that the Marian homilies of Proklos for the most part employ imagery inspired by typology. These images would not be abandoned by subsequent homilists; on the contrary, they formed a standard 'stock' from which writers of the iconoclastic period drew material. However, the standard images were elaborated and embellished with details while, at the same time, an extensive appeal to emotion and the senses emerged during the eighth and ninth centuries. For the purpose of the present study I shall focus on Marian homilies of the iconoclastic period, drawing attention to the

³ I. Kalavrezou, 'Images of the mother: when the Virgin Mary became *Meter Theou*', *DOP* 44 (1990), 165–72.

⁴ M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Milan and Athens, 2000), pl. 45.

⁵ See Henry Maguire's article in this volume; M. Vassilaki and N. Tsironis, 'Representations of the Virgin and their association with the Passion of Christ', in Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God*, 453–63.

⁶ N. Tsironis, 'The body and the senses in the work of Cassia the hymnographer', *Symmeikta* 16 (2005), 139–57. The work of Romanos the Melode is a case that deserves to be treated in its own right, especially with reference to his use of emotion and the senses and his dependence upon the tradition of Syriac hymnography. There has been a certain amount of discussion about Romanos's possible use of Syriac sources (if he indeed came from Homs/Emesa, then he could have been bilingual in Greek and Syriac). The main book on the subject is W.L. Petersen, *The Diatessaron and Ephrem Syrus as Sources of Romanos the Melodist* (Leuven, 1985); see also S. Brock, 'From Ephrem to Romanos', in E.A. Livingstone, ed., *Papers Presented to the Tenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Studia Patristica* 20 (Leuven, 1989), 139–51, and in connection with Gen 22, *idem*, 'Two Syriac verse homilies on the binding of Isaac', *Le Muséon* 99 (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1986), 61–129 (91–6 on Romanos). Both of these articles are included in S. Brock, *From Ephrem to Romanos. Interactions Between Syriac and Greek in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, 1999).

imagery with which the Virgin is invested in the homiletic *corpus*, as well as to the appeal of the preacher to the audience's senses and emotion. As I will argue, the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the material proves that iconological references to emotion and the senses increase and reach a peak during the iconoclastic period although this phenomenon was not to decrease after the ninth century. I suggest that this trend is linked with the ideological background of the debate and that such references were employed by the iconophile writers in order to defend Incarnational theology. Eventually, emotion and the senses came to denote a distinct change in the anthropological conceptions of the time that resulted from the debate over the representation of the divine.

From the outset it should be noted that appeal to emotion and the senses did not appear for the first time during the iconoclastic period.⁷ It first emerged in Syriac poetry and until fairly recently we thought that it was reintroduced at the time of the controversy over the cult of icons.⁸ As such an example – characterised by ample use of vivid imagery and imbued with emotion and appeal to the senses – I have used in the past the homily on Good Friday by George of Nikomedeia, the ninth-century homilist belonging to the milieu of Patriarch Photios.⁹ Recently, Stephen Shoemaker has argued persuasively that the specific text depends on an earlier *Life of the Virgin* ascribed to Maximos the Confessor and surviving only in a Georgian translation.¹⁰ Certainly, the issue of authorship has to be resolved before we are in a position to assess properly the importance of this text for the development of the cult of the Virgin in the Middle Byzantine period. It will then be possible to explore the issue of how the *Life of the Virgin* fits in the thought world of seventh-century Byzantium

⁷ For the use of emotion with reference to the cult of relics in Latin Christianity and during late antiquity, see the insightful article of P. Cox Miller, ‘“The little blue flower is red”: relics and the poetizing of the body’, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8:2 (2000), 213–36. The author makes good use of Peter Brown's description of the recitation of saints' Lives as ‘psychodrame’, i.e. a setting of performance which mobilises strong fantasies in the hearer. See P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981) and Cox Miller, ‘The little blue flower’, 214–16.

⁸ N. Tsironis, ‘George of Nicomedia: convention and originality in the homily on Good Friday’, in E.A. Livingstone, ed., *Papers Presented to the Twelfth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Studia Patristica* 5 (33) (Leuven, 1997), 573–7.

⁹ N. Tsironis, ‘The Lament of the Virgin Mary from Romanos the Melode to George of Nicomedia: an aspect of the development of the Marian cult’ (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1998).

¹⁰ S. Shoemaker, *The Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford, 2002); *idem*, ‘The Virgin Mary in the ministry of Jesus and the early Church according to the earliest *Life of the Virgin*’, *HTR* 98:4 (2005), 441–67; *idem*, ‘The cult of fashion: the earliest *Life of the Virgin* and Constantinople's Marian relics’, *DOP* 62 (2008), 53–74. See also Shoemaker's article in the present volume, above, 53–67. As the author notes in his 2005 article, it is interesting that distinguished scholars writing on Maximos, including Andrew Louth and Lars Thunberg, do not refer to the *Life of the Virgin*; he explains this on the grounds of the dubious authenticity of the text. Cf. A. Louth's review of Shoemaker's *Ancient Traditions* in *The Journal of Religion* 85:3 (July 2005), 498–9.

and more specifically how it is related to the other works of Maximos the Confessor who is its alleged author.¹¹ In the meantime I would only like to remark that its vivid emotional tone may be explained on the basis of its genre. It is generally accepted that each medium and genre observes its own rules and that often what would be unacceptable for one medium or genre is appropriate for another. As I have shown elsewhere,¹² genre in Byzantium, whether poetry, hagiography or homiletics follows its own conventions and belongs in a hierarchical scale. Specific themes that emerge in one genre (e.g. the Lament of the Virgin in the poetry of Romanos the Melode) are not introduced in another before being approved of by the Church. In the case of the *Life of the Virgin*,¹³ we may suggest that the genre of apocryphal literature permitted the liberty of the expression of emotion, as testified by other early apocryphal texts, like the Gospel of Nicodemus. On the basis of the above, the *Life of the Virgin* does not alter in any significant way what we knew about the development of the Marian cult in Byzantium but it remains extremely interesting for the transmission and circulation of apocryphal literature.

The emphasis on emotion and the senses in the literature of the Middle Byzantine period preoccupied me several years ago when I investigated the lament of the Virgin. However, the formulation of a concrete statement was made difficult by the problematic nature of terminology. What is it that we mean exactly when we refer to emotion and the senses, especially taking into consideration the way in which notions altered between Byzantium and our era? Discussions on the issue with colleagues from the National Hellenic Research Foundation persuaded me that any such research should start with a definition of terms.¹⁴ For the purpose of the present study let us only say that we use the notion of the senses in their conventional naming, definition and numbering: touch, smell, sight, hearing, taste. Physiology (in accordance with the non-scientific assumptions of ancient and medieval authors to whom I shall refer below) proves that sight prevails over all other senses and forms part of man's mechanism of survival.¹⁵ Sight is linked to cognition through the

¹¹ Anna Kartsonis in her classical study *Anastasis. The Making of an Image* (Princeton NJ, 1986), esp. 33–9, gives us a clear idea about the theological background of the seventh century, upon which we may base a hypothesis regarding how the *Life of the Virgin* could fit in the picture.

¹² N. Tsironis, 'From poetry to liturgy: the cult of the Virgin in the Middle Byzantine era', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), 91–102.

¹³ Shoemaker, 'The Virgin Mary in the ministry of Jesus', 441–67; S.J. Shoemaker, 'The Georgian *Life of the Virgin* attributed to Maximus the Confessor: its authenticity and importance', in A. Muraviev and B. Lourié, eds, *Mémorial R.P. Michel van Esbroeck, S.J., Scrinium 2* (St Petersburg, 2006), 66–87.

¹⁴ For a discussion of the use of terms in late medieval and renaissance art, see the study of Carl Nordenfalk, 'The five senses in late medieval and renaissance art', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 48 (1985), 1–22 and esp. 7ff.

¹⁵ Semir Zeki (in his pioneering book *Inner Vision. An Exploration of Art and the Brain* [Oxford, 1999]) exposes the results of his research in which he has used positron emission tomography (PET) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to

processing of any given stimulus with the intermediary function of emotion.¹⁶ Recently, Luiz Pessoa has supported the idea that central to cognitive-emotional interactions are brain areas, with a high degree of connectivity (called hubs), which are critical for regulating the flow and integration of information between regions.¹⁷ Sensory input, asserts Pessoa, is critical to the formation of opinion.¹⁸

Already, in the seventh century of our era, the example of Anastasios of Sinai, who responded to the heretical statements of the Theopaschites by using an icon of the Crucifixion, demonstrates that the Byzantines, consciously or unconsciously, used the power of the image as proof of theological assertions.¹⁹ In the iconoclastic period, Theodore the Stoudite appealed to both Heraklitos and Aristotle in order to prove the superiority of sight and defend the power of the image.²⁰

Appeal to emotion and the senses, I believe, was dictated by the underlying themes of the iconoclastic controversy and in particular, by the central position of Incarnational theology by which the cult of icons was defended by iconophile writers.²¹ Linked to Incarnational theology was the sanctity of

study the human visual brain. Zeki expressed interesting views on the relationship between vision and perception in the concluding lecture at the conference 'Art and Science: Exploring the Limits of Human Perception' that was organised by the *Centro de Ciencias de Benasque Pedro Pasqual* in Spain and in which scientists and artists exchanged views on the science of visual arts, consciousness, perception of visual space and architecture etc.

¹⁶ The importance of vision in cognition and specifically in learning is also exemplified in the case study of S.M. Stringer and E.T. Rolls, 'Learning transform invariant object recognition in the visual system with multiple stimuli present during training', *Neural Networks* 21 (2008), 888–903. For perception as the basis of cognition in Byzantium see L. James, 'Color and meaning in Byzantium', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11:2 (2003), 223–33 and esp. 229.

¹⁷ L. Pessoa, 'On the relationship between emotion and cognition', *Neuroscience* 9 (2008), 148–58, with interesting diagrams of the emotional brain (core and extended regions) on p. 149.

¹⁸ Pessoa, 'Emotion and cognition', 149–51. Interaction between emotion and cognitive function also lies at the heart of research projects under way at the Waisman Laboratory for Brain Imaging and Behavior at the Wisconsin University (<http://brainimaging.waisman.wisc.edu/>). See also the essays published in J.C. Borod, ed., *The Neuropsychology of Emotion* (New York, 2000) and its review by J.J. Dunkin, in *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society* 8 (2002), 727–8.

¹⁹ Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 40–68; G. Tsigaras, *Εικόνα και Λόγος. Εικονολογικά Σχόλια στον Αναστάσιο Σινάϊτη* (Xanthi, 1999), *passim*.

²⁰ K. Parry, 'Theodore Studites and the patriarch Nikephoros on image-making as a Christian imperative', *Byzantion* 59 (1988), 164–83; G. Tsigaras, 'Οι αισθήσεις στην εικονολογία του Θεόδωρου Στουδίτη', *Kleronomia* (forthcoming); with reference to the superiority of sight and from the vast bibliography on the topic, I refer the reader to the articles of Liz James, 'Color and meaning', 228 and notes 25, 26; *eadem*, 'Senses and sensibility in Byzantium', *Art History* 27:4 (2004), 523–37, esp. 528.

²¹ B. Pentcheva, 'The performative icon', *Art Bulletin* 88:4 (2006), 631–55. See also, for instance, the arguments set forth in the context of *antirrhethikoi* in the classical study of P.J. Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople* (Oxford, 1958), *passim*, and esp. 167–73; C. Barber, 'The body within the frame: a use of word and image in

matter or, at least, its potential sanctification and its inherently good nature after its assumption by Christ in the Incarnation.²²

The Byzantines, when communicating ideas, employ a symbolic *langage* rather than a direct reference to the topic of their interest. This highly complex symbolic *langage* adds the necessary overlays to the core of their discourse.²³ Their audience, however, had a shared understanding of the symbols employed and were thus in a position to apprehend its hidden meaning. Byzantine writers never refer to emotion or the senses in direct terms; hence in the homiletic and hymnographical sources words related to emotion are hardly ever used as such in the context discussed here.²⁴ Out of the voluminous homiletic corpus of the iconoclastic period,²⁵ I wish to concentrate on the Marian homilies of Andrew of Crete, John of Euboea, Germanos of Constantinople, John of Damascus and Theodore the Stoudite. What I argue is that a close reading of the works of the iconophile authors shows clearly that during this era imagery played an increasingly important role in the evocation of emotion and the senses.²⁶ Imagery, related to visuality and to the

iconoclasm', *Word and Image* 9 (1993), 140–53.

²² See the works listed in note 21; also B. Pentcheva, 'Miraculous icons: medium, imagination, and presence', below, 263–77, which, although it refers to the eleventh century, provides an insightful discussion of the issues discussed here. See especially the section on 'the matter of icons'. On the sanctity of matter see Anthony of Sourozh, 'Body and matter in spiritual life' at www.metropolit-anthony.orc.ru/eng/eng_02.htm, 1–9 and esp. 2 (also published in A.M. Allchin, ed., *Sacrament and Image: Essays in the Christian Understanding of Man* [London, 1967], 33–41); C. Yannaras, unpublished paper delivered at the colloquium organised by The National Hellenic Research Foundation on 'Emotion and the senses in the Orthodox tradition', 8 March 2006.

²³ Recently, C. Galatariotou, 'Emotions, thoughts and texts: a psychoanalytic perspective', in *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (London 21–26 August 2006), vol. 2, 167–8, said that 'conscious, preconscious and unconscious factors, both at the personal and the collective, cultural level (e.g. in terms of what is acceptable and what is internally or externally censored) are crucially important'. For the formation and development of Christian discourse see Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991); for the phenomenology of the performative icon and its relation to Christian discourse see Pentcheva, 'The performative icon', *passim*. For the use of rhetoric and more specifically of metaphor, but also for performative aspects employed in descriptions of church buildings, see Ruth Webb, 'The aesthetics of sacred space: narrative, metaphor, and motion in *ekphraseis* of church buildings', *DOP* 53 (1999), 57–94.

²⁴ Ilias Anagnostakis asserted this in his paper at the colloquium on 'Emotion and the senses in Byzantine tradition', organised by The National Hellenic Research Foundation on 8 March 2006.

²⁵ The homiletic corpus of the middle Byzantine period extends to several volumes of the *Patrologia Graeca* (vols 97–100), not to mention works that have not been included in the series. For the authors, the basic structure, and the liturgical context within which Marian homilies of the eighth century were delivered, see now the study of M.B. Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven. Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood NY, 2008), 19–51.

²⁶ The point is not valid only for the Marian homilies of the period but for the other homilies as well. However, in the example of the Marian homilies, the imagery of emotion and the senses with which the Virgin is vested in the literature of the

cult of images, may well be interpreted as an indirect way for the homilists of the eighth and ninth centuries to affirm the inherently good nature of matter and its potential to partake of sanctity; in other words, as an indirect way of bringing out the reality and the consequences of Incarnational theology.²⁷

Andrew of Crete and John of Euboea are interesting sources of information about the change in views and mentalities in the eighth century. With respect to the rich homiletic *corpus* of Andrew of Crete we shall concentrate particularly on the three homilies delivered on the occasion of the Dormition (Koimesis) of the Virgin.²⁸ In our examples the homilist appeals directly to the senses, either through explicit reference to the five senses (in noun or verb forms), or by means of imagery often deriving from biblical models. Both John of Euboea and Andrew of Crete use the biblical image of the burning coal, which occurs in the vision of Isaiah. In the introduction to his homily on the Conception of the Virgin, John of Euboea refers as follows to the vision of Isaiah: 'in the year that Ozias the king died, I *saw* the Lord sitting upon a high and raised throne ... and seraphim were standing around him in a circle. And I *heard* the thrice-holy voice ...'.²⁹ John continues by describing how Isaiah was cleansed by the angel of God 'and one of the seraphim was sent towards me and took a coal ... and *touched* my mouth, and said: "behold, this coal having *touched* your lips has cleansed you of your sins" ...' and comments: 'If this great prophet of God chastised himself in such a way, what should I do, who unworthily possess mouth and lips and heart and all the sensory organs (αἰσθητήρια)?'³⁰ John starts a series of phrases with the imperative of the verb, *to see* (ἰδοῦ), a rhetorical device often employed in homiletics. The imperative is accompanied by vivid imagery that enhances the effect of his speech, such as the image where sailing on the sea is paralleled with the 'new ark of the covenant'.³¹ Emotions are vividly described with emphasis on the antithetical feelings of joy, longing and mourning: 'yearning attracts me but fear rebuffs me';³² 'tearful I became on account of my unworthiness';³³ 'Behold, sorrow

iconoclastic period reveals a pattern that was to be transferred to an artistic idiom after the Triumph of Orthodoxy.

²⁷ See Charles Barber, *Figure and Likeness. On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Princeton and Oxford, 2002).

²⁸ Martin Jugie has suggested that these three homilies were delivered as a trilogy. For the argument, see M. Jugie, *La mort et l'assomption de la très sainte Vierge*, ST 114 (Rome, 1944) and M.B. Cunningham, 'Andrew of Crete: a high-style preacher of the eighth century', in *eadem* and P. Allen, eds, *Preacher and Audience. Studies in Early Christian Homiletics. A New History of the Sermon 1* (Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 1998), 277. See also B. Daley (translation and introduction), *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies*, (Crestwood NY, 1998), 27–35.

²⁹ John of Euboea, *In conceptionem sanctae Deiparae*, PG 96, cols 1459–1500, esp. 1461 B–C.

³⁰ John of Euboea, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, col. 1461C–D.

³¹ John of Euboea, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, cols 1464B–1465A.

³² John of Euboea, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, col. 1461A: ὁ πόθος ἔλκει με ὁ φόβος ἀνθέλκει με ...

³³ John of Euboea, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, col. 1461B: περίδακρυς γέγονα διὰ τὴν ἐμὴν

becomes joy and mourning jubilation; moaning and transient (πρόσκαιρα) tears become unspeakable eternal joy.³⁴ The same pattern of contrast between fear and desire occurs in other homilies of the period (such as, for example, the first homily on the Dormition by John of Damascus) and undoubtedly represents a commonplace of Middle Byzantine homiletics.³⁵ Desire linked with speech also features in the second homily on the Dormition by John of Damascus, where the author says he is inflamed by the scorching torch of longing and overcome by tears of joy.³⁶

Other emotions that emerge in the text are jealousy (of his brothers towards Joseph),³⁷ envy and shame (for the sperm of Judas),³⁸ sorrow and shame again.³⁹ Sorrow is expressed in the lament of Anna, when she bemoans her sterility but also the loss of her beloved husband. Her mourning develops in an ascending manner, evolving from the juxtaposition of the happy past and the qualities of Joseph and his generation to the sorrowful present. Anna laments a fate that does not even allow her to mourn him as dead since nobody is able to tell her where he is.⁴⁰

Emotion and the senses are combined in vivid imagery in the homilies on the Dormition written by Andrew of Crete. In his first homily, *On the Dormition of the Most Holy Lady Theotokos*, the homilist refers to Christ who lived on earth in the flesh and through the cross fought death, combating the source of evil (ἀρχέκακος), and sealing his omnivorous belly (παμφάγον γαστέρα).⁴¹ Humankind's life in the flesh is considered to be a constant succumbing to the temptation of the senses, although those who uphold Christian virtues will be granted the *vision* of the luminous paradise and their *eyes* will be filled with its unfathomable beauty.⁴² Praising the feast, Andrew urges every 'tongue to dance' in order to 'hail' the Theotokos,⁴³ who has introduced *joy* by dismissing the *sorrow* of Eve.⁴⁴ The Mother of God accepted the purpose of her life and therefore followed the natural laws in order to fulfill the plan

ἀναξίότητα.

³⁴ John of Euboia, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, col. 1465A: ἰδοῦ τὸ πένθος εἰς χαρὰν μετήλθεν, καὶ ὁ ὄδυρμός εἰς ἀγαλλίασιν. Ἴδου στεναγμός καὶ πρόσκαιρα δάκρυα, καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χαρὰ ἀνεκλάλητος.

³⁵ N. Tsironis, 'Desire, longing and fear in the narrative of middle-Byzantine homiletics', in M. Vinzent, ed., *Papers Presented to the Fifteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Studia Patristica 44* (Leiden, 2010), 515–20.

³⁶ John of Damascus, *In dormitionem II*, 5.1–4 (CPG 8062): B. Kotter, ed., *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, Patristische Texte und Studien, vols 7, 12, 17, 22, 29 (5 vols, Berlin and New York, 1969–88), vol. 5, 522.

³⁷ John of Euboia, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, col. 1465C.

³⁸ John of Euboia, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, col. 1465C.

³⁹ John of Euboia, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, cols 1468B and 1469A.

⁴⁰ John of Euboia, *In conceptionem*, PG 96, cols 1472B–1473A.

⁴¹ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem s. Mariae I* (CPG 8181), PG 97, cols 1045–72, esp. 1048A.

⁴² Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem I*, PG 97, col. 1052A.

⁴³ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem s. Mariae II* (CPG 8182), PG 97, cols 1071–90, esp. 1072C: καὶ πάσα γλῶσσα χορευέτω ...

⁴⁴ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem II*, PG 97, col. 1072C–D.

of the divine economy.⁴⁵ Her experiences throughout her life are recounted with special emphasis on the *shame* she felt at the Crucifixion, the *suffering* she experienced during it and the *rebukes* she heard afterwards.⁴⁶ ‘Every listener of the divine focuses his *hearing* (his ears) on you, *listening* to your voice (i.e. the voice of the Virgin),’ Andrew says.⁴⁷ The homilist urges his audience to act as witnesses to the feast: ‘So come, friends who share in the mystical power of speech/the word, (μύσται τοῦ λόγου), and fellow-lovers of all that is good and those who love *seeing* (φίλοι, μύσται τοῦ λόγου καὶ συνερασταὶ τῶν καλῶν καὶ φιλοθεάμονες).’⁴⁸ In a striking passage, in which sight reveals the symbols that point to the mystery, the Virgin appears, saying:

It is possible for everyone, if he wishes to contemplate the word through the image (what is said through what is seen). Vivid images and convincing signs of my translation (μετάστασις) are to be found before the eyes of those who behold the divine things in faith. The tomb carved in stone – still standing intact – through the funerary inscription reveals the symbols in a mystical voice.⁴⁹

Later Andrew says:

So, let every unbeliever believe and learn through self-examination (αὐτοψία), the power of the word (of what has been said). The believer will be content with the word and through *what appears* (φαινόμενα) *will understand the unseen* and will marvel at what is worthy of attracting his amazement.⁵⁰

The passage reveals the role that the senses play in the context of the iconoclastic debate, sight being regarded as possessing the power to persuade even the unbelievers.

Elsewhere *taste* is invoked in connection with both spirit and matter: ‘*Taste*, dear friends, now that you have been allowed to enter, the heavenly banquet.’⁵¹ The same image occurs repeatedly, inviting the audience to correlate its experience of transcendental reality to the sense of taste, by sharing the food of a heavenly banquet. In this context, Andrew later refers to himself as the one

⁴⁵ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem I*, PG 97, col. 1053A; *In dormitionem II*, col. 1073A.

⁴⁶ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem II*, PG 97, col. 1076B.

⁴⁷ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem I*, PG 97, I, col. 1053D.

⁴⁸ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem I*, PG 97, I, cols 1052C; *In dormitionem II*, col. 1076C.

⁴⁹ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem I*, PG 97, cols 1056D–1057A: “Ἐξεστί γὰρ τῷ βουλομένῳ παντί, τὰ εἰρημένα διὰ τῶν ὀρωμένων καταστοχάσασθαι. Πρόκεινται γοῦν κατ’ ὀφθαλμοῖς τῶν θεωμένων τὰ θεῖα πιστῶς, εἰκόνες τινὲς ἑναργεῖς, καὶ χαρακτήρες λάλοι τῆς ἐμῆς μεταστάσεως ὁ τάφος οὗτος ἐκεῖνος, ὁ ἐν τῇ πέτρᾳ γλυφεῖς, ὃς μέχρι νῦν ἔστηκεν ἀσινῆς, τῆς ἐντυμβίου περιγραφῆς ἀκηρόκτῳ φωνῇ διασημαίνων τα σύμβολα.

⁵⁰ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem I*, PG 97, col. 1057B: “Ὁ οὖν ἄπιστος ἀπίτω, καὶ μανθανέτω δι’ αὐτοψίας τῶν λεγομένων τὴν δύναμιν· ὁ πιστὸς ἀρκείσθω τοῖς λεγομένοις, καὶ κατανοεῖτω διὰ τῶν φαινομένων τὰ μὴ ὀρώμενα, καὶ θαυμάζετω τὰ θαύματος ἄξια.

⁵¹ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem II*, PG 97, col. 1077A.

offering the dinner: 'I, the stranger and foreigner and narrator of invaluable [things]'.⁵² On another occasion, he situates the Mother of God at a heavenly banquet which does not involve the sacrifice of animals but in which she plays the role of the cup of divine nectar, a standard liturgical metaphor that refers to the role of the Virgin in the Incarnation.⁵³ And continuing, he notes that she is indeed the heavenly banquet where the life-giving bread, our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal life, assumed the flesh of Adam's species; it is she who bore within herself the one who keeps creation together, having been made bread (literally ἀρτοποιηθέντα, meaning 'having assumed human nature' or 'having become the bread of life').⁵⁴ This is what is happening today, this is what you see happening in front of your very eyes (τὰ ὁρώμενα), he says.⁵⁵ Andrew speaks of himself as the person who by the grace of the Lord is allowed to touch the impossible (τῶν ἀνεφίκτων ἀπτόμενος).⁵⁶ Moreover, in appealing to the senses he urges his audience to raise themselves above the realm of the visible and to dim their own senses in order to be elevated above (or beyond) these and the world and attain the divine mystery.⁵⁷ Through the Virgin, the one who is without body acquires a body, speaking to us through body and soul, and assuming the entirety of human nature in order to renew it.⁵⁸

The vision of the body that brought God to life, that is, the sight of the body of the Mother of God, becomes a vehicle by which Andrew commences his third homily on the Dormition.⁵⁹ Light, dance and perfume; beauty, sweetness and harmony imbue this last homily.⁶⁰ 'Look at the source of immortality', Andrew says. 'Look where the eternal rivers of life spring from and whither they all come to become immortal.'⁶¹ The author ends his homily by addressing the Mother of God as the new myrrh-jar containing the unused myrrh; as the delight of the oil of ointment; and as the incense of all the intelligible perfumes.⁶²

Full of emotion, but not mournful [is] the present feast! Let us sing something mournful but not sad. What arms will hold the one who has held the one who cannot be contained? What prayer shall we offer you

⁵² Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem II*, PG 97, col. 1084B–C: Ταύτης κάγώ σήμερον ἐστιάτωρ ὁ ξένος καὶ ἔπηλος καὶ τῶν ὑψηλῶν θεαμάτων ὑπὲρ ἀξίαν ὑφηγητής.

⁵³ See Paul in 1 Cor. 10:17: 'we are all partakers of that one bread'. For a detailed discussion of the symbolism of food and especially of bread with reference to the Virgin see the excellent study of George Galavaris, *Bread and the Liturgy. The Symbolism of Early Christian and Byzantine Bread Stamps* (Madison, Milwaukee and London, 1970), 182–5.

⁵⁴ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem II*, PG 97, cols 1084D–1085B.

⁵⁵ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem II*, PG 97, col. 1080C.

⁵⁶ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem II*, PG 97, cols 1080D–1081A.

⁵⁷ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem II*, PG 97, col. 1081A.

⁵⁸ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem II*, PG 97, col. 1085B.

⁵⁹ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem III*, PG 97, col. 1089B.

⁶⁰ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem III*, PG 97, col. 1092A–D.

⁶¹ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem III*, PG 97, col. 1096A.

⁶² Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem III*, PG 97, cols 1097C–1099A.

upon your tomb? With what hymns shall we send you away? With what lips shall we glorify your Dormition? With what voice?⁶³

The change in the attitude towards emotion and the senses in the iconoclastic period is exemplified abundantly in the Marian homilies of another homilist from the beginning of the iconoclastic period, namely Germanos of Constantinople, an ardent iconophile and prolific writer.

In his second homily, *On the Presentation of the Virgin into the Temple*, Germanos refers to those who scorn Mary with the following words:

Let those who move their *tongues* against her (i.e. the Virgin) and *look* but do not *see* (lit. *see* as if they do not *see*), where and when have they *seen* things like these (viz. the miracle of a virgin entering and staying in the temple where even the priest did not enter but once a year).⁶⁴

The Virgin is entrusted to the temple accompanied by a procession of rich people and is received by the priests; the prophet receives her in his own hands and brings her to the holy of holies.⁶⁵ In the dialogue between the prophet and Anna, the latter states that she opened her mouth and together with the lamentation of her heart, she pleaded tearfully with the Lord not to prove her worse than the animals and not to make her barren, as he created her in his image and likeness.⁶⁶ Fixing her eyes on the heavens, beating her breast with her hands, she cried out to the Lord of the highest.⁶⁷ Germanos indirectly refers to those who speak ill of the Virgin, asking her to make them (literally, their *image*) disappear from her city; 'let them be ashamed, and perish and disappear'.⁶⁸ And he moves on, setting up an antithetical pattern between *them*, the unbelievers, and *us* the believers who acknowledge Mary as the Highest on earth and praise her in faith and rejoice in yearning, and venerate in awe.⁶⁹ Mary is called the divine dew of the inner heat that burns the author, the God-springing drop [that soothes] his parched heart, the brightest candle of his dark soul, the guide of his path, the strength of his weakness, the cloth of his nakedness, the wealth of his poverty, the healing of his incurable wounds, the reversal of his tears, the ceasing of his sighs, the transformation of his misfortunes, the consolation of his pain, the loosening of his bonds, the hope of his prayers.⁷⁰ All of these vivid emotional images lead to a supplication of the Mother of God to hear his prayers, pity his tears, and to save him and grant

⁶³ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem III*, PG 97, col. 1100A–B.

⁶⁴ Germanos of Constantinople, *In praesentationem s. deiparae II* (CPG 8008), PG 98, cols 309B–320B, esp. 312A. For a brief but insightful discussion of Germanos of Constantinople see Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, 38–41, and for the English translation of the homily, *ibid.*, 163–72.

⁶⁵ Germanos of Constantinople, *In praesentationem II*, PG 98, col. 312A and C.

⁶⁶ Germanos of Constantinople, *In praesentationem II*, PG 98, col. 313A–B.

⁶⁷ Germanos of Constantinople, *In praesentationem II*, PG 98, col. 313C.

⁶⁸ Germanos of Constantinople, *In praesentationem II*, PG 98, col. 317B.

⁶⁹ Germanos of Constantinople, *In praesentationem II*, PG 98, col. 317B–C.

⁷⁰ Germanos of Constantinople, *In praesentationem II*, PG 98, col. 317D.

him the joy of partaking of the divine kingdom.⁷¹ The joy of the heavens is expressed through an equally long, ornate series of images.

The liveliness of the dialogue between the Theotokos and the angel is the most striking feature of the homily *On the Annunciation*, and indeed, is most often commented upon by scholars. For the purpose of the present study I would like to draw attention to the vibrant naturalistic imagery that permeates the encounter and dialogue between Mary and Gabriel and especially the allusions to the beauty of Gabriel and the Virgin: 'I see, youth, the beauty of your countenance worthy of depiction, and the delightful sight of your visage, and I hear your words which I have never heard ...'.⁷² And the angel replies: 'Know for sure and believe that I was surprised seeing your beauty drawn by God and thus seeing you, I think that I apprehend the glory of my Lord.'⁷³ Two remarks: first, references to beauty are connoted by words related to artistic depiction (ἀξιογράφιστον κάλλος or 'beauty worth depicting'; θεογράφιστον κάλλος or 'beauty drawn by God');⁷⁴ second, beauty serves as proof of divinity, that is, it is linked to the glory of the Lord. The Virgin, wondering about the annunciation of the mystery, exclaims, 'How will the light above the sun, how will the *untouched* light *touch* human flesh?'⁷⁵ 'Every human *tongue* will praise you', the angel says, and the Virgin replies, '... and how shall I *hold* Christ, the light of the world? And how will this never-setting sun be *held* by the unintelligible moon?'⁷⁶ Germanos introduces the dialogue between the Virgin and Joseph with the common direct appeal to the hearing of the audience; he exhorts them to be attentive to the events that take place in front of their eyes: 'if you wish, let us listen to what righteous Joseph said to her'.⁷⁷

Germanos artfully depicts the succession of emotional states. The confusion Gabriel provoked in the heart of the Virgin is followed by joy at the mystery of the miraculous conception of Christ by the Virgin and then by grief at the deaf and hurt heart of Joseph who wants to beat his face and asks Mary to leave his house. When Joseph asks her to reveal to him who her lover is, she says that she does not know where he lives. And she adds, 'Truly, I would also like to encounter him; I would like to see his beauty worthy of depiction and to speak with him, for he bade me, "hail" ("rejoice"), and now I am in sorrow.'⁷⁸ The next day Joseph feels remorse over his attitude towards the Virgin, because in the meantime Gabriel has revealed the divine mystery to him:

⁷¹ Germanos of Constantinople, *In praesentationem II*, PG 98, cols 317D–318B.

⁷² Germanos of Constantinople, *In annuntiationem s. deiparae* (CPG 8009), PG 98, cols 320A–340A, esp. 321D–324A.

⁷³ Germanos of Constantinople, *In annuntiationem*, PG 98, col. 324A.

⁷⁴ For an interesting discussion of the writing vocabulary in middle Byzantine literature see Pentcheva, 'The performative icon', *passim*.

⁷⁵ Germanos of Constantinople, *In annuntiationem*, PG 98, cols 325A and 321B, respectively.

⁷⁶ Germanos of Constantinople, *In annuntiationem*, PG 98, col. 329A–B.

⁷⁷ Germanos of Constantinople, *In annuntiationem*, PG 98, col. 332A.

⁷⁸ Germanos of Constantinople, *In annuntiationem*, PG 98, col. 336C–D.

Yesterday, lead to error by suspicion, I blamed your splendour and your beauty; now though, having received the information from on high, I ask your forgiveness and I kneel solemnly before your greatness and praise your name.⁷⁹

The visible and the invisible worlds are reconciled through the Mother of God, says Germanos in his first homily, *On the Dormition*.⁸⁰ The Virgin is presented as the true bridge between heaven and earth, the one who has made all people citizens of heaven (οὐρανοπολίτης ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀπετελέσθη) and made the shepherds mingle with the angels (καὶ ποιμένες μετ' ἀγγέλων ἐμίχθησαν).⁸¹ Faith and honour to the Virgin are beyond doubt; however, people needed to see her body (literally, 'needed its view'), Germanos notes, reminding us of Cavafy's 'Half Hour', where the poet says that 'despite the certitude of your presence, there was need to have your body near me'.⁸² The *metastasis* of the physical body of the Virgin that became the cause of the salvation of humankind makes people sad: 'Why have we not been fortunate to have you with us *bodily*?'⁸³ Yet, 'you please the *eyes* of our soul that *sees* you daily; as in the old days you used to live with us *bodily*, so now you abide with us in spirit. And we all *hear your voice*; and our *voice* reaches your *ears and hearing*.'⁸⁴ The virginal body of Mary is described as 'beautiful, all-holy, all-pure, ever the abiding place of God, and thus, having nothing to do with earthly decay'.⁸⁵

Emotion is often evoked in Germanos's homiletic *corpus* through strings of epithets or emphatic antithetical patterns. In the latter, the common antithesis between Eve and Mary is often employed, for example when he refers to the Virgin as the leaven of Adam's rebirth:

You are the mother of the truly true life; ... you are the freedom from Eve's shame. She was mother of the dust (χοός); you, the mother of light. Her womb was the womb of decay; your womb was the womb of incorruption. Her abiding place was death, yours is *metastasis* from death. Her eyelids meant perdition on earth; you are the eternal glory of vigilant eyes. Her children meant sorrow; your offspring brought joy to the entire universe. She departed as earth to earth; you have brought forth life to us (or: for our sake), and again life you returned, and even after death you were able to bring life to the people.⁸⁶

Another string of epithets occurs in his first homily *On the Dormition*:

Who will not admire you, the solid roof, the stable refuge, the vigilant intercession, the constant salvation, the firm help, the

⁷⁹ Germanos of Constantinople, *In annuntiationem*, PG 98, col. 337D–340A.

⁸⁰ Germanos of Constantinople, *In dormitionem* I, PG 98, cols 340A–348C.

⁸¹ Germanos of Constantinople, *In dormitionem* I, PG 98, col. 344A–B.

⁸² C. Cavafy, *Ανέκδοτα Ποιήματα 1882–1923* (Athens, 1982), 169.

⁸³ Germanos of Constantinople, *In dormitionem* I, PG 98, col. 344C.

⁸⁴ Germanos of Constantinople, *In dormitionem* I, PG 98, col. 344D.

⁸⁵ Germanos of Constantinople, *In dormitionem* I, PG 98, col. 345B.

⁸⁶ Germanos of Constantinople, *In dormitionem* I, PG 98, col. 349A–B.

unmovable protection, the inviolable wall, the treasure of delights, the unimpeachable (ἀνέγκλητον) heaven, the sheltered fortification, the all-strong entrenchment (περιχαράκωμα), the powerful tower of succour (ἀντιλήψεως), the haven for the afflicted, the tranquility of the troubled, the guarantor of sinners ... All that is yours is sweeter than honey mixed with wax; and all your servants greatly desire all this and in desiring [it] we are greatly recompensed by you.⁸⁷

In Germanos's *corpus*, the imagery of emotion and the senses is intertwined with his narrative, interwoven with the dramatic tone characteristic of his work.

John of Damascus, the theoretician and defender of the iconophile cause, provides inspiring images, and his homilies illustrate the extensive use of emotion and the senses during the eighth and ninth centuries. His work allows us to look into the theoretical principles underpinning the resort to emotion and the senses. In his homily on the Nativity of the Virgin, John gives a definition of human beings that demonstrates amply the conception of humans as psychosomatic entities that reside between earth and heaven. The Creator is said to have transformed nature in the best possible way through humanity. Men and women, standing between spirit and matter, act as intermediaries between the visible and the invisible creation.⁸⁸ Praising the Theotokos, John refers in a series of phrases to the loins of Joachim, the womb of Anna, the breast that gave milk to the one who fed the feeder of the world. 'Blessed are the loins and the womb through which you sprang! Blessed are the *arms* that held you and the *lips* that enjoyed your pure kisses, solely the parental ones ...'.⁸⁹ In the *Homily on the Nativity* we encounter extensive references to the Incarnation (σάρκωσις), employed in the context of the body, emotion and the senses. 'His flesh from your flesh and his blood from your blood; milk from your breast suckled God and your lips were united with the lips of God.'⁹⁰ The human blood and flesh assumed by God through the Virgin is also mentioned later in the same homily.⁹¹ The same pattern occurs in a more elaborate form in the first homily on the Dormition, where the perfectly human and the equally perfect divine nature of Christ are revealed in a series of rhetorical phrases that conclude with the following words:

the created and the uncreated, the mortal and the immortal, the circumscribable and uncircumscribable, the divine and the human will, the divine and the human energy, both of them possessing free will, divine and human at the same time, for indeed, what was not assumed cannot be cured.⁹²

⁸⁷ Germanos of Constantinople, *In dormitionem I*, PG 98, col. 353A–B.

⁸⁸ John of Damascus, *In nativitate b.v. Mariae* (CPG 8060), ed. Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 169, par. II. lines 6–17.

⁸⁹ John of Damascus, *In nativitate*, ed. Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 175, par. II. lines 13–15.

⁹⁰ John of Damascus, *In nativitate*, ed. Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 177, lines 27–29.

⁹¹ John of Damascus, *In nativitate*, ed. Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 180, line 17.

⁹² John of Damascus, *In Dormitionem b.v. Mariae I* (CPG 8061), ed. Kotter, *Die*

The sanctity of matter is clearly propounded here by the person who has defended the cult of images on the ground of the potential sanctity of matter. It is not by accident that John is the writer who makes the most extensive and elaborate use of emotion and the senses in an ontological context.

The passages most relevant to the present study are those in which the homilist refers to the individual parts of the body of the Virgin. In the first passage he says:

eyes always turned towards the light, *ears* listening to the spirit and *taking pleasure* in the lyre of the spirit, through which the word entered in the flesh, *nose* attracted by the *smell* of the myrrh of the bridegroom ... *lips* praising the Lord and *kissing* his own *lips, tongue and throat* discerning the words of God and rejoicing at the divine *sweetness*, pure and immaculate heart *seeing and desiring* the invisible God, *lap* inhabited by the uncontainable and *breasts* of milk by which God was nourished, the child Jesus; *hands* that held God and *knees* higher than the throne of the cherubim...; *legs* guided by the law of God as if behind a lamp of light and running after him without return; [*legs*] that drew the one who was desiring the one desired. The whole [Virgin was] the bride-chamber of the spirit. The whole [Virgin was] the city of the living God ... All-good and all-close to God⁹³

In the second passage, the homilist refers to the body of the Virgin as lying on the deathbed which he *embraced* with his own *hands; eyes and lips and front, neck and cheeks*⁹⁴ All the angels are present, singing and praising her and assisting the ascent of the divine body to heaven. All those present (the humans), with *fear and desire and tears of exhilaration* stand around the divine and most-blessed body, embracing it and covering it with kisses; its every single member is filled with sanctity and blessing through its *feeling*.⁹⁵ To prove the power of her body, John first cites the water with which the body of the Virgin is washed, but reversing the logical order he says that it was not the body that was cleansed by the water but the water that was cleansed by the Virgin's body. Listing the series of miracles performed at the deathbed of Mary, he refers again to the body and the senses: the hearing of the deaf and the feet of the crippled were restored, the sight of the blind was renewed and the sins of the sinful who approached in faith were forgiven (literally, the manuscripts of the sinful approaching in faith were destroyed).⁹⁶

The appeal to the audience's sense of sight is employed once again in the first homily on the Dormition, where the preacher exhorts his audience to

Schriften, vol. 5, p. 486, lines 24–46, esp. lines 38–42 and 46 (ὄντως γὰρ τὸ ἀπρόσληπτον ἀθεράπευτον).

⁹³ John of Damascus, *In nativitatē*, ed. Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, pp. 179–80, lines 34–51.

⁹⁴ John of Damascus, *In dormitionem b.v. Mariae II* (CPG 8062), ed. Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, pp. 522–3, lines 5–10.

⁹⁵ John of Damascus, *In dormitionem II*, ed. Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 528, lines 6–11.

⁹⁶ John of Damascus, *In dormitionem II*, ed. Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 528, lines 14–18.

perceive (literally, 'watch') the grace of the day; to watch the magnificence and reverence of the day praised by him on this occasion:

Blessed are those who *see* because *seeing* is most appropriate. Blessed are those who have acquired unintelligible *senses* [to perceive] the flashes of lightning that make joyful the present night; the praises of the angels that glorify the Dormition of the Mother of Life; the divine words of the apostles eulogising the burial of the God-bearing body ...⁹⁷

The tomb of the Virgin is said to be surrounded by angels while her human attendants reside there, 'venerating it with their *eyes*, *kissing* it with their *lips* and with the *desire* of their soul...'⁹⁸

Finally, we shall examine Theodore the Stoudite, perhaps the most militant of all the iconophile writers, who wrote fewer Marian homilies than Andrew of Crete, John of Euboia, Germanos of Constantinople and John of Damascus. In his homilies, Theodore deploys emotion and the senses less than the other writers already examined. What is more, Theodore's *corpus* comprises numerous works on the cult of icons. How are we to interpret this evidence? Let us first look at the examples of his homilies on the Annunciation and on the Dormition.

In his homily on the Annunciation, the reality of the Incarnation is affirmed emphatically, albeit in the context of an exhortation to the monastic brotherhood to worship in spirit: 'The Son of God becomes Son of Man, through the Theotokos, abiding in her and through her rebuilding a temple for him and becoming a perfect man.'⁹⁹ In his homily on the Dormition, Theodore describes the Virgin as the God-lit moon, the gold-born and God-built ark of the holy fountain.¹⁰⁰ The Virgin, evoked in highly descriptive complex epithets, such as 'gold-born' and 'God-made', is described as closing her *physical eyes* (αἰσθητοὺς ὀφθαλμοῦς), though retaining her *intelligible eyes* (τοὺς νοητοὺς φωστήρας ...), her *noetic eyes*, big and bright like stars, never setting, always alert in mediating with God for the salvation of humankind. Her *lips* set in motion by God (θεοκίνητα χεῖλη) are silenced but her mediating *mouth* intercedes unceasingly with God for everything and everybody. Her *palms* are described in a similar way. It is worth noting that every event, the closing of the eyes, the silencing of the mouth, the succumbing of her palms, is said to have been carried out by the Virgin herself; it was she who shut her eyes, silenced her mouth and hid her sun-like countenance. The homilist's choice to describe the departure of the Theotokos in terms of the passing away of bodily features shows an interest in the senses that in the same context is intrinsically linked to the cult of icons for,

⁹⁷ John of Damascus, *In dormitionem I*, ed. Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 487, lines 1–8.

⁹⁸ John of Damascus, *In dormitionem I*, ed. Kotter, *Die Schriften*, vol. 5, p. 499, lines 7–11.

⁹⁹ Theodore the Stoudite, *On the Annunciation I*, PG 99, cols 502D–596B, esp. 593A.

¹⁰⁰ Theodore the Stoudite, *On the Dormition of our Holy Lady Theotokos*, PG 99, cols 720B–729B, esp. 721A.

as Theodore says, 'the bright countenance of the Virgin was hidden but she still shines through her icon, offering herself to people's veneration even though the heretics may not want this'.¹⁰¹

Andrew of Crete, John of Euboea, Germanos of Constantinople, John of Damascus and Theodore the Stoudite employ evocative imagery and refer frequently to emotion and the senses. The study of these individual cases shows a difference in the extent to which they appeal to emotion and the senses. The case of Theodore the Stoudite is particularly interesting as he wrote fewer Marian homilies than all the other iconophile writers of the period, but also made fewer references to emotion and the senses, something that can be explained by the fact that Theodore was addressing a monastic audience. Had he appealed more extensively to emotion and the senses, this might have undermined his teaching over the control of emotion and the senses (so nicely expounded in his catechetical orations) in his role as *hegoumenos* (the leader and 'shepherd' of the community).

As I have tried to demonstrate elsewhere, the Mother of God was a topic used by the iconophile homilists of the eighth and ninth centuries as a metonymy for the affirmation of the full reality of the Incarnation, which upheld the cult of icons.¹⁰² Similarly, emotion and the senses were employed by homilists in order to stress the physical aspect of human nature assumed by the incarnate Christ. The emotions and the senses of the audience are evoked by the homilists of the Middle Byzantine period through the use of rhetoric. By means of an imagery deriving partly from biblical quotations, the homilists of this period exalt divine personages, invite their audience to participate in joyful feasts, transpose them to an eternal reality where the senses are transformed and become a vehicle by which the believer participates in the life of the divine. In the liturgical context of the church, emotion and the senses become a vehicle for the expression of deeper notions underlying the iconophile argumentation. At the same time emotion and the senses are affirmed and accepted as aspects of human existence, though always oriented towards the apprehension of a meta-physical reality. In all of the examples studied, the homilist uses the senses of the audience and appeals to emotion in order to direct the faithful towards the transcendental reality of the divine. Thus, it is clear that our writers defend matter in view of its potential to be sanctified through the perception of what lies beyond the senses. Emotion obviously is not condemned; on the contrary, it is employed in order to assert the concrete reality of human nature, as understood by the iconophile writers, i.e. nature as transformed by its assumption by God bearing the memory of the prelapsarian state latent in the human soul.

The influence of this development can be detected in both the literature and the visual arts of the post-iconoclastic period. Both media are characterised by a distinct emotional tone unprecedented in earlier centuries. More specifically, as far as art is concerned, emotion and the senses may be detected not only in

¹⁰¹ Theodore the Stoudite, *On the Dormition*, PG 99, col. 721B.

¹⁰² N. Tsironis, 'The Mother of God in the iconoclastic controversy', in Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God*, 27–39.

the emergent iconographical themes (Deposition from the Cross, Lamentation, Entombment) but also in the artistic manner in which they are depicted, as Henry Maguire has convincingly demonstrated.¹⁰³ The large, melancholy eyes of the Virgin summarise aptly the stress on both senses and emotion. Invested with multiple layers of symbolism, the Mother of God, both in literature and art, stands as a symbol and metonymy for the core of the mystery of the Incarnation by which iconophile writers defended the cult of images.

The Triumph of Orthodoxy, if nothing else, marked a victory over the sharp Manichaean, or rather Gnostic, distinctions between spirit and matter, light and darkness, good and evil, and established the reality of the 'grey zone' where humans struggle for the transformation of their senses and their emotions and direct them to the attainment of God. That the Mother of God should have become the vehicle of these developments is only natural because she truly stood between human and divine and put into practice the transformation of emotion and the senses – at least in the context of Christian discourse – serving and participating in the divine economy. Hence, the Virgin functioned as a guarantor and proof of the worthiness of matter and its suitability as a representation of the divine.

I would like to close with the words of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh (1914–2003), in whose homilies we can perceive how cognitive categories formulated during the Middle Byzantine period have influenced the anthropology of the Orthodox Church, and how these views have survived and find exponents even today:

Emotion and the senses are inevitably linked to our bodily existence as human beings ... Love, the sense of beauty, the sense of worship; all go far beyond the realm of our intellect. ... *the great events of the Christian life are all rooted in matter not in spirit...*¹⁰⁴

* * *

Since 2006, when this paper was written, a number of important studies on emotion and the senses have appeared. Unfortunately, they could not be included in the footnotes of the present paper. However, among them I have to quote the long awaited study by Ruth Webb on *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Aldershot, 2009), which is a thoroughly revised version of her Ph.D. thesis on the *Eikones of Philostratus*. Important studies are also included in the volume presented to Leslie Brubaker, edited by Angeliki Lymberopoulou, *Images of the Byzantine World. Visions, Messages and Meanings* (Aldershot, 2011). Among them I should single out the contributions of Liz James, Averil Cameron, Mary Cunningham, Henry Maguire and Kallirroe Linardou. Two other studies that need to be quoted are Mary B. Cunningham's *Wider than Heaven: Eighth Century Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood, NY, 2008) and Bissera Pentcheva's *The Sensual Icon. Space, Ritual and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 2010).

¹⁰³ H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton NJ, 1981); *idem*, 'The depiction of sorrow in Middle Byzantine art', *DOP* 31 (1977), 123–74.

¹⁰⁴ Anthony of Sourozh, 'Body and matter in spiritual life', 6.

Section IV: Later Developments in the Marian Cult: Popular Devotion, Liturgy and Artistic Expression

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Apocalyptic *Panagia*: Some Byways of Marian Revelation in Byzantium¹

Jane Baun

It was a cruel, biting winter in Constantinople, and Andrew the Fool, an early Byzantine holy man sleeping rough on the streets, was slowly freezing to death. But just as he began to lose consciousness, he experienced a lovely warmth, and a sensation of golden light. An angel came, who took him on a two-week tour of the Other World, during which he thawed out completely. He saw the marvellous garden of paradise, the joys of the blessed, the wonders of the firmament, the angelic host and even the throne of God. But there was one heavenly being he never saw: the Mother of God. At the end of Andrew's journey, the angel explained why:

Our distinguished lady, the queen of the heavenly powers and Mother of God, is not present here, for she is in that vain world to support and help those who invoke God's only Son and Word and her own all-holy name. It would have been appropriate to show you her abode, which is splendid beyond description, but there is no time left, my friend, for by the order of the Lord you must return whence you came.²

This tiny passage in the tenth-century *Life of Andrew the Fool* is easy to overlook, but its implications are striking. Mary could have been living a glorious, quiet life in heaven in her splendid house, but the author of *Andrew's Life*, Nikephoros, is certain that she spends at least some of her time coming to the aid of those on earth. The passage describes Mary almost as a bodhisattva, the Buddhist conception of a perfectly enlightened being who voluntarily and

¹ I would like to acknowledge the help of many kind correspondents who have generously shared references: above all, Annemarie Weyl Carr, and also Leslie Brubaker, Averil Cameron, Kate Cooper, Dirk Krausmüller, Derek Krueger, Kallirroë Linardou, Eunice Maguire, Henry Maguire and Stephen Shoemaker. Thanks are due also to Judith Herrin, whose mention of the opening passage from the *Life of Andrew the Fool* in a graduate seminar at Princeton piqued my interest, and inspired this study, just over a decade later, which is offered to her in gratitude.

² L. Ryden, ed. and trans., *The Life of St. Andrew the Fool* (Uppsala, 1995), 60–1.

selflessly defers nirvana so long as others continue to suffer. Out of compassion, such bodhisattvas roam the earth, rescuing the distressed, assuming whatever form might be necessary to reach them. Many have remarked on similarities between the medieval and modern cult of Mary, in her aspect as Mother of Mercy (*Madonna della Misericordia*), and the cult of the bodhisattva Kuan Yin, who began to be represented in female form as the goddess of compassion and mercy in China from about the twelfth century CE.³ Countless legends recount the acts of mercy performed by Kuan Yin on earth, often in disguise.⁴

The Mother of God as bodhisattva – did anyone else in Byzantium believe, as did Andrew's hagiographer, that Mary spends part of her time on earth, responding to the distress calls of Christians? We are used to the entirely orthodox idea of Mary's *heavenly* intercessions effecting deliverance for sinners, the ill, and those in peril on land or sea. But to what extent did Eastern Christians in the medieval period believe that Mary might also come to their aid in bodily form, physically present in this world? In what ways was Mary thought to help those on earth, and in what forms did she reveal herself? The title of this chapter, 'Apocalyptic *Panagia*', thus takes 'apocalyptic' in its literal sense of *apokalypsis*, 'revelation': its topic is the *Panagia* revealed.⁵ It will examine the many ways in which Mary was thought to reveal herself, and to involve herself in the earthly lives of her medieval Byzantine followers.

Our study will not take the high road of Marian devotion, well-trodden by Mariologists and other historians, but its low roads, byways and diversions. We will draw on a broad evidential base in proving this 'low road' of Marian devotion in medieval Greek religious culture, including hagiography, edifying tales, miracle collections, historiography and the medieval apocryphal apocalypses (visionary journeys to the Other World). Evidence will be adduced which spans the fourth to fourteenth centuries, but the heart of the enquiry lies in the ninth to eleventh centuries, and our story will largely settle in the Middle Byzantine period.

How was the *Panagia* thought to reveal herself, and to come to the aid of her faithful? The medieval Greek evidence yields five main channels of Marian revelation: (1) icons; (2) relics; (3) visions, both in dreams and waking; (4) apparitions (the sense that Mary is actually, bodily, present); (5) written revelations. The categories are not of course rigidly exclusive, and the distinctions drawn may seem artificial when applied to any one witness. For example, the believer's recourse to an icon, relic or healing spring often engenders a sense of the real presence of the *Panagia*, which then results in a vision or an apparition. The written record of such an event can then serve as a channel of revelation for those who come later.

³ Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara* (New York, 2000), 294–5.

⁴ Martin Palmer, *Kuan Yin: Myths and Revelations of the Chinese Goddess of Compassion* (London, 1995), 57–93.

⁵ *Panagia*, 'All-Holy One', at once both reverent and intimate, has been a common Marian epithet since the Patristic period; see G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), 1000.

This study will not deal directly with the first two channels, icons and relics. The *Panagia's* wonderworking icons, relics and springs, with their shrines, rituals and processions, are well known, especially those of her Constantinopolitan shrines at Blachernai, Pēgē and the Hodegon monastery.⁶ We will focus instead on the last three channels: visions, apparitions, and revelations, most of them recorded in non-official, apocryphal literature, what we may dare to call *popular* literature. 'Popular', for our purposes, denotes literature that could be appreciated by people of all social and cultural levels, the kind of literature that Robert Browning called 'low-level', and that Cyril Mango, in a pioneering passage which gave us all permission to take non-élite literature seriously, called 'lowbrow':⁷

If lowbrow Byzantine literature brings us into closer contact with reality than the stilted compositions of the educated élite, it also, I believe, gives us a much clearer conception of the average Byzantine's intellectual horizons. Chronicles, Lives of saints, stories about anchorites, various florilegia of useful sayings, oracles – that was the kind of literature that really circulated next, of course, to patristic, liturgical, and devotional books. To dismiss this literature as monkish, as if its readership was confined to monks, while laymen read secular literature, shows a complete ignorance of the situation. Of course, monks read it, but everyone else who was capable of reading read it, too, and, for the most part, read nothing else – barring again the Bible and the Fathers. I should like, therefore, to insist on the view that the conceptual world of Byzantium can most fully be appreciated only on the basis of lowbrow literature.⁸

Among historians, it is no longer controversial to insist, as did Mango in 1981, that the conceptual world of a medieval culture 'can most fully be appreciated only on the basis of lowbrow literature'. Theologians, however, and historians of doctrine, have been a harder sell. It has been more difficult to persuade them to include 'lowbrow' and popular religious texts in their considerations of the formation of doctrine. But, adapting Mango's manifesto to my own purposes, I would like to insist that the theological culture of Byzantium, and the development of Orthodox doctrine, can most fully be appreciated only when popular and apocryphal literature is taken into account, alongside the more usual canonical and 'highbrow' sources. The point is particularly important when we seek to chart the development of Marian belief, devotion,

⁶ See esp. A. Weyl Carr, 'The Mother of God in public', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens and Milan, 2000), 325–37; A. Weyl Carr, 'Threads of authority: the Virgin Mary's veil in the Middle Ages', in S. Gordon, ed., *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture* (New York and Basingstoke, 2001), 59–93; C. Angelidi, 'The veneration of the Virgin Hodegetria and the Hodegon Monastery', in Vassilaki, *Mother of God*, 373–87.

⁷ R. Browning, 'The "low level" saint's Life in the early Byzantine world', in S. Hackel, ed., *The Byzantine Saint* (London, 1981), 117–27; C. Mango, 'Discontinuity with the classical past in Byzantium', in M. Mullet and R. Scott, eds, *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition* (Birmingham, 1981), 48–57.

⁸ Mango, 'Discontinuity with the classical past in Byzantium', 52–3.

dogma and doctrine, for this is truly an area in which the people – the *populus* which participated in the creation and consumption of popular religious literature – took the lead.

When it comes to Mary, the faithful have always pushed at the barriers which the official church would set up between them and their *Panagia*. To take just one example, the early Church Fathers and their heirs mostly protested that Mary could not possibly have suffered in childbirth like a normal woman, but folk rituals and spells across the ages bear witness to the firm conviction of ordinary folk that Mary was a real woman, who suffered real birth pangs, and understood human pains and sorrows intimately.⁹ From fifth-century debates surrounding the Council of Ephesus over the title 'Theotokos', to current discussions among the Roman Catholic faithful over whether Mary should be defined dogmatically as 'mediatrix' and 'co-redemptrix', the insistence of the laity, based on their lived experience of Mary's action in their lives, has been seen to have a powerful effect on the dogmatic consensus finally hammered out by theologians.

The people-led nature of Marian belief holds true in both East and West. It has received explicit recognition in Roman Catholic theology in the concept of the *sensus fidelium*, which recognises that church doctrine evolves in a dialogue between the *magisterium*, the teaching authority of the church hierarchy, and the *sensus fidelium*, the complex of beliefs and practices of the people of God. One modern Catholic scholar has described the process in this way: 'the faithful join with the teaching authority in maintaining the faith of the church. [they] are not mere passive recipients, nor, at the other extreme, an autonomous source'.¹⁰ The *sensus fidelium* can even play a prophetic role in the definition of doctrine. John Henry Newman, commenting on dogmatic statements regarding Mary as Theotokos ('God-bearer') associated with the council of Ephesus, observed in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* that 'the title *Theotocos*, or Mother of God, was familiar to Christians from primitive times' and that 'the spontaneous or traditional feeling of Christians had in great measure anticipated the formal ecclesiastical decision'.¹¹ From the fifth century to the twenty-first, the 'sense of the faithful' regarding Mary has helped to shape doctrine and practice, either indirectly or through direct consultation. The faithful are seen to preserve and embody the tradition of the church, and that which they have always and everywhere held to be true constitutes the Catholic tradition – the tradition *kath'olon*, 'according to the

⁹ J. Baun, 'Discussing Mary's humanity in medieval Byzantium', in R.N. Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, Studies in Church History 39 (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester NY, 2004), 63–72.

¹⁰ M. O'Carroll, *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Wilmington DE, 1983), 322.

¹¹ J.H. Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* 4.2.11 (London, 1909), 145, online at www.newmanreader.org; see also O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, 322; for Ephesus, see the contributions in C. Maunder, ed., *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, 2008), by R.M. Price, 'The *Theotokos* and the Council of Ephesus', 89–103, and A. Atanassova, 'Did Cyril of Alexandria invent Mariology?', 105–25.

whole'. Anticipating themes later taken up by Vatican II, Newman affirmed that 'the body of the faithful is one of the witnesses to the fact of the tradition of revealed doctrine, and, their consensus through Christendom is the voice of the Infallible Church.'¹²

Post Vatican II, talk of the *sensus fidelium* is commonplace in Roman Catholic scholarly and theological circles. Although its utility for the study of the evolution of Eastern Orthodox doctrine and practice is obvious, the concept is not, so far as I have seen, much used among scholars and theologians of Orthodoxy. This chapter represents a first attempt at its application to Byzantine Church history. The dynamic of the *sensus fidelium*, as predicting and preserving the ultimate course of catholic tradition, has played itself out most dramatically in the Byzantine Church at two moments in its history: in the eighth and ninth centuries, in the stiff resistance to, and ultimate defeat of, iconoclasm, and in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, in the popular thwarting of imperial attempts at achieving union with Rome. A critical mass of the Orthodox faithful in both cases regarded the initiatives as deviations from the catholic consensus, and damnable innovations. Each movement had a long period of reception, which saw varying levels of resistance (passive and active) and state-sponsored repression: ultimately, each was ultimately rejected by the mass of laity and clergy.

The consensus of the Orthodox faithful has thus traditionally acted to discourage theological speculation and innovation, and to preserve the patristic *status quo*. In contrast, the Roman Catholic *sensus fidelium* has tended to advance doctrines which follow biblical and patristic tendencies to their logical conclusion, in ways which other Christians have often considered unacceptable innovation. With respect to modern Marian dogmas such as the Immaculate Conception (1854) and the bodily Assumption (1950), and the proposed dogma of Marian co-redemption, the Vatican has maintained that such developments were responses to the irresistible sense of the faithful, and informed by careful patristic scholarship. Pius XII was seen to define the bodily Assumption of Mary as dogma (a truth which must be believed) only after explicit and protracted consultation with the faithful and the theologians.¹³ While Pius's bold declaration may have pleased the Catholic faithful, it failed to impress Eastern Orthodox theologians and dogmatists, who have stood fast against such perceived doctrinal innovations, doubting the legitimacy of declaring definitively on something for which they felt there was no biblical or patristic warrant.

The official voices of Eastern Orthodoxy, true to its apophatic traditions, may hesitate to venture too far beyond Scripture and the Fathers, but the lively

¹² J.H. Newman, 'On consulting the faithful in matters of doctrine', in J. Gaffney, ed., *Conscience, Consensus and the Development of Doctrine* (New York, 1992), 398.

¹³ Between 1849 and 1950, the Vatican is said to have received petitions in the dogma's favour signed by a total of 113 cardinals, 18 patriarchs, 2,505 bishops, 32,000 priests and male religious, 50,000 female religious, and eight million lay persons: see O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, 56.

tradition of apocryphal literature in the East has rarely displayed such scruples. Narratives containing completely extra-biblical tales of Mary's Dormition (or in Greek *Koimesis*, both meaning 'falling asleep') have proved a fertile genre from earliest times, in both East and West.¹⁴ Dormition apocrypha began to circulate from at least the fourth century, all over Christendom. They purport to tell the full, miraculous story of the events surrounding Mary's death and translation into the heavenly realms (whether in soul or in body depends on which tradition one reads). The sheer weight of textual and devotional traditions such as these demands a response from a Church's *magisterium*. Its response to teachings contained in apocrypha may well be negative, but condemnation of an idea or practice still helps to drive the development of doctrine, as church officials work to provide sound teaching in its place.

'Apocalyptic *Panagia*', then, concerns the *Panagia* as revealed to the faithful, and preserved, particularly, in apocryphal texts, as the conceptual and devotional vanguard, often ahead of official pronouncements. East and West, the bulk of the material which preserves strong convictions regarding Mary's revelations, and her activities on earth, is apocryphal and popular, not official and high-level, and is found in edifying tales, miracle collections and apocalypses. It is a literature written not by named clergy or theologians, but by anonymous authors, possibly incorporating oral and local tradition. These are not canonical texts, but circulate on the fringes of official religion. This mass of material has exerted a steady pressure on official religion, helping to shape the consensus of what became orthodoxy.

How did the *Panagia* reveal herself to her faithful? Visions or apparitions of Mary, in which she intervenes directly in earthly life, can be found in the following types of medieval Greek text: funeral orations and consolation literature, ecclesiastical and secular histories, votive poetry, and numerous saints' Lives, miracle stories, edifying tales and apocryphal narratives. These texts, which are summarised in the chart of Marian revelations which follows, show Mary operating primarily in eight modes:

- (i) to give a premonition of death or consolation;
- (ii) to confirm the veneration offered to her;
- (iii) to give a particular task or a special commission;
- (iv) to combat heresy, sacrilege, or blasphemy;
- (v) to help a sinner repent, make amends, and obtain forgiveness;
- (vi) to heal the sick or possessed, or to confirm a healing;
- (vii) to defend or save those in peril;
- (viii) to intercede in the Other World for sinners.

[See Revelations chart below, 213–18]

Two caveats should be offered regarding the 'Revelations chart'. First, the selection is the result of a preliminary testing of the Marian waters: it is

¹⁴ S. Shoemaker, *The Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford, 2003).

illustrative rather than exhaustive, aiming only to provide representative examples. This is particularly true of the copious edifying tale literature. Second, the chart is limited to published material – and therein lies a tale in itself. A quick look at part II of the appendix on *Maria Deipara* in the *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca*, which catalogues Marian *Miracula et alia varia*, reveals that many of the Greek Marian miracle collections are in fact unpublished. Numerous factors have conspired to consign the Byzantine collections to unpublished obscurity. Bollandist scholars and other editors have so far concentrated on publishing the Greek *miracula* of notable saints, figures such as Kosmas and Damian, Thekla, Demetrios, George and Artemios, whose cults offer particular historical interest.¹⁵ Since one of the overriding goals of the Bollandist fathers was to determine which saints were worthy of inclusion in the Roman Catholic sanctoral calendar, their method aimed to separate the historical from the legendary. Marian *miracula* do not fit well in this programme, since, like all post-New Testament writings about Mary, they add little to our knowledge of her actual historical person. The *miracula* also exist in multiple copies and versions: editing them represents huge effort for comparatively little gain, save in documenting the development of Mary's later cult. Here we encounter the paradox which afflicts so many popular religious texts: the very popularity which produced so many surviving manuscript copies and variants has contributed to their virtual invisibility among modern scholars, since it hinders the production of standard critical editions.¹⁶

Given that the 'Revelations chart' represents a selection rather than a comprehensive catalogue, making generalisations over time from its modest sampling is dangerous – and the dating of anonymous edifying tales is in any case notoriously difficult. But some of the thematic material does form chronological clusters which may be significant. For example, all three instances uncovered for this study of Mary imparting a task or commission (III), almost as a Christian muse, are connected with late antique figures: the late third-century bishop of Neocaesarea in Pontus, Gregory Thaumaturgos, and two sixth-century authors, Romanos the Melode and John Rufus (chart, *5–7).¹⁷ The involvement of Mary in combating heresy, blasphemy or sacrilege (IV) also appears mostly in early sources, in particular, five edifying tales from the seventh century, four included by John Moschos in his *Spiritual Meadow* and one attributed to Anastasios of Sinai (*8–12).¹⁸ Mary also appears to enforce orthodoxy in a later text, the ninth-century *Letter of the Three Patriarchs*, but, as will be discussed later, in a singular fashion (*13–15).

Categories VI–VIII, with witnesses spread more evenly across the entire Byzantine period, show Mary in her core activities, the classic deeds of the

¹⁵ H. Delehaye, 'Recueils antiques de miracles des Saints', *AnalBoll* 43 (1925), 5–73; also *idem*, *Les légendes hagiographiques* (Paris, 4th edn, 1955).

¹⁶ See J. Baun, *Tales from Another Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2007), 35–9.

¹⁷ Numbers prefaced by an asterisk indicate the reference numbers in the 'Revelations chart'.

¹⁸ For Mary as fighting heresy in Moschos, see J. Simón Palmer, *El Monacato oriental en el Pratum spirituale de Juan Mosco* (Madrid, 1993), 319–21.

bodhisattva: healing the sick or possessed, and saving those in mortal or eschatological peril. We may perhaps also detect in this grouping a growing tendency in later stories for Mary to act through her icons.¹⁹ Prior to the ninth century, informants typically report a sense of the personal, physical presence of the Mother of God, or of a vision of Mary as a living woman, often dressed in purple.²⁰ Starting in the late ninth century, however, after the iconophile victory, miracle narratives begin to appear which focus on images of Mary rather than on her physical presence. Tenth-century visions and tales, such as the vignette from *The Life of Andrew the Fool* with which we began, still preserve mostly the sense of Mary appearing in person, in her body. But in later texts, Mary increasingly is thought to act primarily through her icons. Stories of Mary's defence of the empire offer a suggestive contrast.²¹ Both Annemarie Weyl Carr and Bissera Pentcheva juxtapose two narratives of Mary's interest in military affairs: a tenth-century sighting of Mary in bodily form coming to the aid of the emperor John Tzimiskes and his army, and a twelfth-century dream vision in which an icon of Mary pleads for the emperor Manuel I.²² In the earlier example, the historians Leo the Deacon, John Skylitzes and John Zonaras (*31) record several versions of a dream vision experienced by 'a pious woman in Constantinople', in which she saw either Mary talking to St Theodore Stratelates, asking him to help the emperor John, or Mary herself 'in the sky over the city, coming to the emperor's defence with a corps of military saints, led by Theodore Stratelates and George'.²³ In the later, twelfth-century, account, Niketas Choniates (*32) records how a certain Mavropoulos, a contemporary of the emperor Manuel I, had a dream before the (disastrous) battle at Myriokephalon, in which he heard Mary, through her icon of the Virgin Kyriotissa, pleading for the military saints for help, but to no avail.²⁴ As Bissera Pentcheva notes, however, in a dense and interesting footnote to this second story, its use of an icon, rather than a bodily apparition, may have less to do with actual patterns of belief and supernatural experience, and more to do with the political motivations of the story's propagators.²⁵

¹⁹ See especially Weyl Carr, 'Mother of God in public', 325–37.

²⁰ Henry Chadwick examined several early 'woman in purple' Marian visions in one of his inimitable learned footnotes in his 'John Moschus and his friend Sophronius the Sophist', *JTS* 25 (1974), 65, n. 5.

²¹ Mary's special status as the main guarantor of Constantinople and the empire was established in late antiquity, as documented by Averil Cameron; see her *Continuity and Change in Sixth-Century Byzantium* (Aldershot, 1981), articles XIII, XVI, and XVII.

²² Weyl Carr, 'Mother of God in public', 332–7, and B. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: the Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park PA, 2006), 68–9.

²³ *Ioannes Zonarae Epitomae* (Bonn, 1897), 533–54; trans. E. Trapp, *Militärs und Höflinge im Ringen um das Kaisertum ...* (Graz, 1986), 39; paraphrase from Weyl Carr, 'Mother of God in public', 332.

²⁴ J.-L.A. van Dieten, ed., *Nicetae Choniatae Historia* (Berlin, 1975), vol. 3, 190–1; trans. H. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium: The Annals of Nicetas Choniates* (Detroit MI, 1984), 107–8.

²⁵ Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, 218, n. 57.

The majority of visions and tales show Mary as all-compassionate and merciful, and tireless in her good works; however, just occasionally, vengeance becomes the predominant theme, in ways that can seem to gratify less the *iustitia* of God, and more a very human desire for revenge. John Moschos records two vengeance tales in his *Spiritual Meadow* (*9, 11). In *Spiritual Meadow* §47, a stern Mother of God, after three warnings, finally severs the hands and feet of a blasphemer. In §175, Mary appears to a woman who sought vengeance against the emperor Zeno for wronging her daughter, saying 'Believe me, woman, I frequently tried to get satisfaction for you, but his [i.e., God's] right hand prevents me', because of the emperor's almsgiving.²⁶ Also from the seventh century, an edifying tale attributed to Anastasios of Sinai has Mary facilitating the crushing to death of a blasphemer through a falling beam (*12). Such 'vengeance' edifying tales, like the vengeance Psalms of the Old Testament, reveal what believers *really* wanted Mary to do. They also show Mary as an agent of God's justice as well as of his mercy, *iustitia* as well as *clementia*, fostering holy awe in the believer.²⁷

The *Letter of the Three Patriarchs to Emperor Theophilos*, however, arguably takes Marian vengeance beyond the straightforward *iustitia* of the edifying tales, to a new low (*13–15). A work of blatant iconophile propaganda originating in the later ninth century, it contains a dossier of twelve icon prodigies, in which the holy persons involved – Jesus Christ, Mary, St Andrew – work *miracula* through their images.²⁸ Many of these stories circulated independently as edifying tales, in *florilegia* which enjoyed a wide readership and long afterlife.²⁹ They became familiar through repeated hearing during services each year for the Sunday of Orthodoxy, the ritual remembrance of the defeat of iconoclasm and other heresies celebrated in Orthodox churches on the first Sunday of Lent.³⁰ The *Three Patriarchs* dossier describes the adventures (and misadventures) of 12 miracle-working icons, over 13 incidents. Nine of the marvels described, four of which involve images of Mary, have positive outcomes: healings, conversions, protection, strengthened faith, awe and wonder. Some incidents which begin negatively, with anti-Jewish or anti-Muslim overtones – as when a 'Jew' or an 'Arab' outrages an icon – end positively, when the flow of blood from the wounded image increases the faith of those who see it or effects the conversion of the perpetrator.³¹ Four of

²⁶ J. Wortley, trans., *The Spiritual Meadow of John Moschos* (Kalamazoo MI, 1992), 144.

²⁷ With thanks to Conrad Leyser for comments during this paper's first airing.

²⁸ J.A. Munitiz, J. Chrysostomides, E. Harvalia-Crook and Ch. Dentrinos, eds and trans, *The Letter of the Three Patriarchs to Emperor Theophilos* §7.1–15 (Camberley, 1997), 32–51; for dating, see xxxviii; analysis of the dossier, li–lxv.

²⁹ E. Harvalia-Crook, 'A witness to the later tradition of the *Florilegium* in *The Letter of the Three Patriarchs* (BHG 1386)', in Ch. Dendrinos et al., eds, *Porphyrogenita* (Aldershot, 2003), 341–67.

³⁰ Harvalia-Crook, 'A witness to the later tradition', 341–2.

³¹ Munitiz, Chrysostomides, Harvalia-Crook and Dendrinos, *Three Patriarchs* §7.7, 12–13, 40–7.

the 13 incidents are, however, overwhelmingly negative in tone, and cast a pall over the whole work. In the spirit of Lactantius' *De mortibus persecutorum*, Christ, Mary and St Andrew are seen to wreak gruesome revenge through their icons on iconoclast blasphemers and scoffers, who lose eyes or body parts, become possessed, or are given over to execution. Two of these four incidents implicate Mary, acting in response to the mocking of her icon 'in the courtyard of the great church' in Alexandria. The second sees Mary refusing sanctuary to a scoffer, who is then taken away to be executed (*15):

Similarly, there was another one, who, in this very city of Alexandria, dared similar things, and being pursued by the soldiers took refuge with the revered icon of the Mother of God. But she turned away from him in the sight of everyone, and handed him over to be put to death as an enemy.³²

The shock value of this vignette is that it seems to violate one of the most basic principles about the Mother of God: that, as articulated in the *Memorare* section of the fifteenth-century Latin prayer *Ad sanctitatis tuae pedes*, 'never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided by thee'.³³ The *Apocalypse of the Theotokos* (*35), roughly contemporary with the *Three Patriarchs* letter, expresses the same conviction for medieval Byzantium:

And the Panagia said, 'Master, have mercy on the sinners! Behold the punishments, for every creature upon earth calls upon my name. And when the soul comes forth out of the body, it cries aloud, saying, "O holy lady Theotokos!"' Then the Lord said to her, 'Listen, Panagia Theotokos, if anyone names and calls upon your name, I will not forsake him, either in heaven or on earth.'³⁴

The story in the *Three Patriarchs* violates expectations further in that it shows Mary turning her face away. Another Middle Byzantine apocalypse, *The Apocalypse of Anastasia* (*36), promotes the firm belief that while God may turn his face, Mary will never abandon sinners:

But the Holy Theotokos, the citadel of the Christians, the hope of the despairing, seeing that the Lord turned his countenance from the sons of men, cried out with a loud voice, and said to all the saints, 'Is there no one to help the sinners?' Then all fell on their faces before the throne of God: the angels and archangels, prophets and apostles and martyrs, crying out and saying, 'Master, have mercy on the sinners, and do not destroy the works of your hands!'³⁵

³² Munitiz, Chrysostomides, Harvalia-Crook and Dendrinis, *Three Patriarchs* §7.10, 44–5.

³³ References and texts at <http://www.preces-latinae.org/thesaurus/BVM/Memorare.html>

³⁴ *Apocalypse of the Theotokos* §26, trans. Baun, *Tales*, 399.

³⁵ *Apocalypse of Anastasia* §28, trans. Baun, *Tales*, 406.

Given that the story of the Alexandrian iconoclast pursued by soldiers shatters two of the medieval believer's most solemn certainties regarding Mary, the *Three Patriarchs'* redactors presumably believed that Mary's refusal to shelter the man proved he was obdurate scoffer whose recourse to her icon was not genuine. Regardless of the man's actual inner state, however, the *Three Patriarchs* letter highlights the magnitude of his crime unforgettably, through its masterful violation of some of the medieval believer's most treasured expectations about Mary.

The first vignette concerning the Alexandrian icon of Mary in the *Three Patriarchs* dossier is possibly the most appalling of all the Marian vengeance tales (*14):

Once in the great city of Alexandria, a certain person, an *hyperarchos* by rank, used to march up and down in the courtyard of the Great Church, where stood a holy icon of the Mother of God, and he kept on mocking and making fun of her. One day, therefore, the Mother of God appeared to him when he was still alone and waking up. She had with her, as he said, two eunuchs who stretched out his hands and feet while she traced with her holy finger along his limbs. Suddenly the ligaments of the limbs at the elbows and feet at the ankles fractured and fell to the ground, like leaves breaking off a fig tree.³⁶

The story of course emulates the torture of being stretched on the rack until the ligaments and joints snap, which would have been familiar to a Byzantine audience from martyrologies, since as a Roman penalty for sacrilege, it was one of the tortures sometimes used by the Roman authorities for early Christian martyrs.³⁷ The medieval Byzantine penalty for sacrilege, however, as recorded in the eighth-century *Ekloga* and later law books, was typically blinding, which more commonly appears in Byzantine edifying tales and hagiography as a penalty for those who violate holy things.³⁸ The incident is similar to the vengeance tale of the blasphemous actor Gaïanas recounted by John Moschos (*9), but the exquisite, poetic cruelty of the torture's description in *Three Patriarchs* letter, and the studied, methodical involvement of the Mother of God in its execution, mark a departure which exceeds the normal demands of a display of divine *iustitia*.

The vignette seethes with the visceral hatred of iconoclasts which informs so much of the medieval iconophile propaganda, skewing the judgement of its pious authors to the point of portraying Mary as capable of deliberate cruelty, and of inflicting suffering. This story is about as far as one can get from the image with which we began this chapter, of Mary as bodhisattva,

³⁶ Munitiz, Chrysostomides, Harvalia-Crook and Dendrinis, *Three Patriarchs* §7.9, 44–5.

³⁷ Tertullian mentions torture of Christians on the rack as being guilty of sacrilege, in his *Apologeticus adversus Gentes pro Christianis* §1–2; see T.H. Bindley, trans., *The Apology of Tertullian* (London, 1890), 4–10 (www.tertullian.org/articles/bindley_apol/bindley_apol.htm).

³⁸ Baun, *Tales*, 242.

working tirelessly to alleviate the sufferings of humanity, no matter how sinful or hapless. The iconophile propaganda is thus revealed as a literature apart, an aberration. While, as we have seen, edifying tales of the 'vengeance' type did circulate about Mary, in the overwhelming proportion of tales, Mary warns, urges, prods and helps sinners, even the most seemingly irredeemable, and she leaves room for repentance. Remember that the blaspheming actor Gaianus was given three warnings, with personal appearances, before he was finally punished (*9). The Legend of Theophilus the Oikonomos (*17), which originated as a sixth-century Byzantine edifying tale, but became widely popular all over later medieval Europe, offers a further case in point. Impoverished, Theophilus sells his soul to the devil (or to a 'Hebrew magician', depending on the version). In the more developed, later versions, he then meets the devil on three successive nights at a crossroads, renouncing in turn Christ and his baptism, God his Creator, and even Mary herself (called 'the Mother of Mercy' in Latin versions).³⁹ Overcome with remorse, Theophilus prostrates himself, weeping, before an icon of the Mother of God, calling upon her for help. The face of God turns away from the sinner, but Mary goes with Theophilus in person to see the devil, demands the release of Theophilus from his agreement and finally achieves his redemption.

Like the Buddhist collective memory of the great bodhisattvas, the predominant Christian conviction regarding Mary is that there is no length to which she will not go to bring back repentant sinners, even those guilty of the most terrible crimes. The many hundreds of manuscripts of the *Apocalypse of the Theotokos* (*35) which survive, copied in numerous languages from the eleventh century to the nineteenth,⁴⁰ testify to the widespread medieval Christian belief that Mary had not hesitated to enter Hades itself to try to alleviate the suffering of sinners. Once there, she was even thought to have offered to endure punishment herself in solidarity with her grandchildren, the Christian sinners.⁴¹ The theology of the medieval apocalypses is not completely positive: in an example of Marian piety gone overboard, both the *Apocalypse of the Theotokos* and its sister text, *The Apocalypse of Anastasia* (*36), display considerable doubt about God's capacity for mercy. God the Father, Jesus and Mary are depicted almost as a dysfunctional family, with Mary acting to shield sinners from the wrath of an angry father and son bent on justice at all costs.⁴² The two medieval apocalypses may have their doubts about the male members of the Trinity, but they have none whatsoever regarding Mary, who is portrayed as endlessly merciful, compassionate and patient with sinners. Abused, Marian piety risks what appears to modern hearers as theological distortion, but at its best, it equips the faithful with unshakeable confidence in divine mercy.

³⁹ BHG 1319–22; see Revelations chart at no. 17 for references.

⁴⁰ Baun, *Tales*, 39–59.

⁴¹ *Apocalypse of the Theotokos* §25; see Baun, *Tales*, 398.

⁴² Baun, *Tales*, 267–99.

Plates



PLATE 1.4 Silver *repoussée* plaque, 10th–11th century, Sagholasheni, the Georgian Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilissi.



PLATE 1.5 A detail from the *basma* (frame) of the Shemokmedi icon of the Virgin, 11th–12th century, the Georgian Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilissi.



PLATE 1.6 Enamel from the Botkin collection, 12th century, the Georgian Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilissi.



PLATE 1.7 The Kathisma Church, drain pipe crossing the inner octagon from north-east westward, to the holy rock.



PLATE 3.1 Poreč, Cathedral of Eufraasius, wall mosaics in the main apse. [Source: Henry Maguire]



PLATE 3.2 Poreč, Cathedral of Eufrasius, wall mosaic. The Visitation. [Source: Henry Maguire]



PLATE 3.3 Poreč, Cathedral of Eufrasius, wall mosaic. The Annunciation. [Source: Henry Maguire]



PLATE 3.4 Munich, Christian Schmidt Collection, gold pendant. Annunciation, Visitation, and Nativity. [Source: courtesy of Christian Schmidt]



PLATE 3.6 Castelseprio, S. Maria, wall painting. The Nativity. [Source: Henry Maguire]



PLATE 3.5 Ravenna, Archiepiscopal Museum, Throne of Maximian, ivory panel. The Journey to Bethlehem. [Source: Hirmer Verlag, Munich]

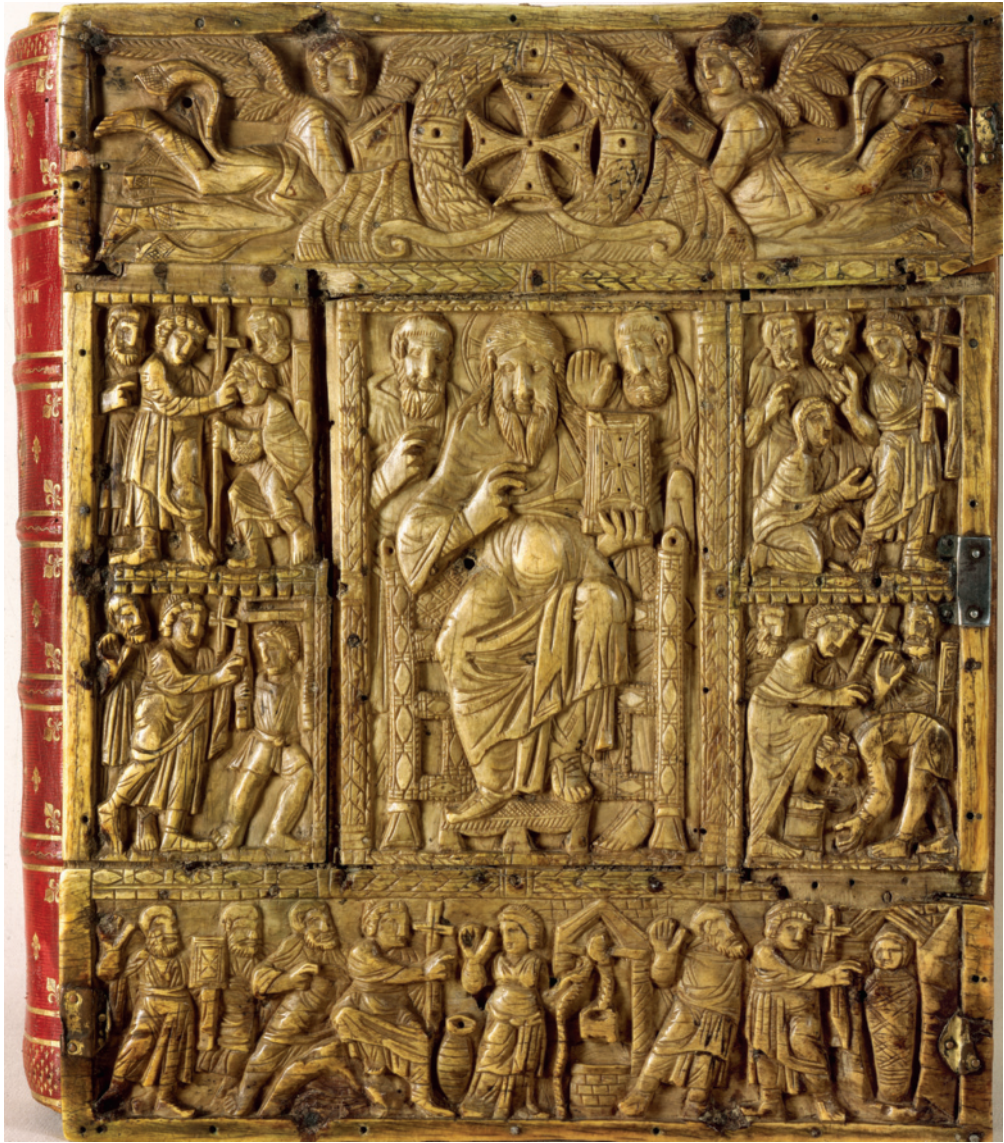


PLATE 3.7 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ivory diptych. Christ with New Testament scenes.
[Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France]



PLATE 3.8 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ivory diptych. The Virgin and Child with New Testament scenes. [Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France]



PLATE 3.9 Erevan, Matenadaran, Cod. 2734 (Etschmiadzin Gospels), fol. 228v. The Annunciation. [Source: Helmut Buschhausen]



PLATE 3.10 Poreč, Cathedral of Eufrasius, wall mosaic. The Annunciation, detail of the Virgin's belt and veil. [Source: Henry Maguire]



PLATE 3.12 Poreč, Cathedral of Eufrasius, wall mosaics in the main apse. Real and fictive shells. [Source: Henry Maguire]



PLATE 3.11 New York, Choron Collection, veil. [Source: after Eunice Dauterman Maguire, *The Rich Life and the Dance: Weavings from Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic Egypt* (Urbana, 1999), 71, no. A27]



PLATE 3.13 Erevan, Matenadaran, Cod. 2734 (Etschmiadzin Gospels), fol. 229r. The Adoration of the Magi. [Source: after L.A. Dournovo, *Armenian Miniatures* (London, 1961), 37]

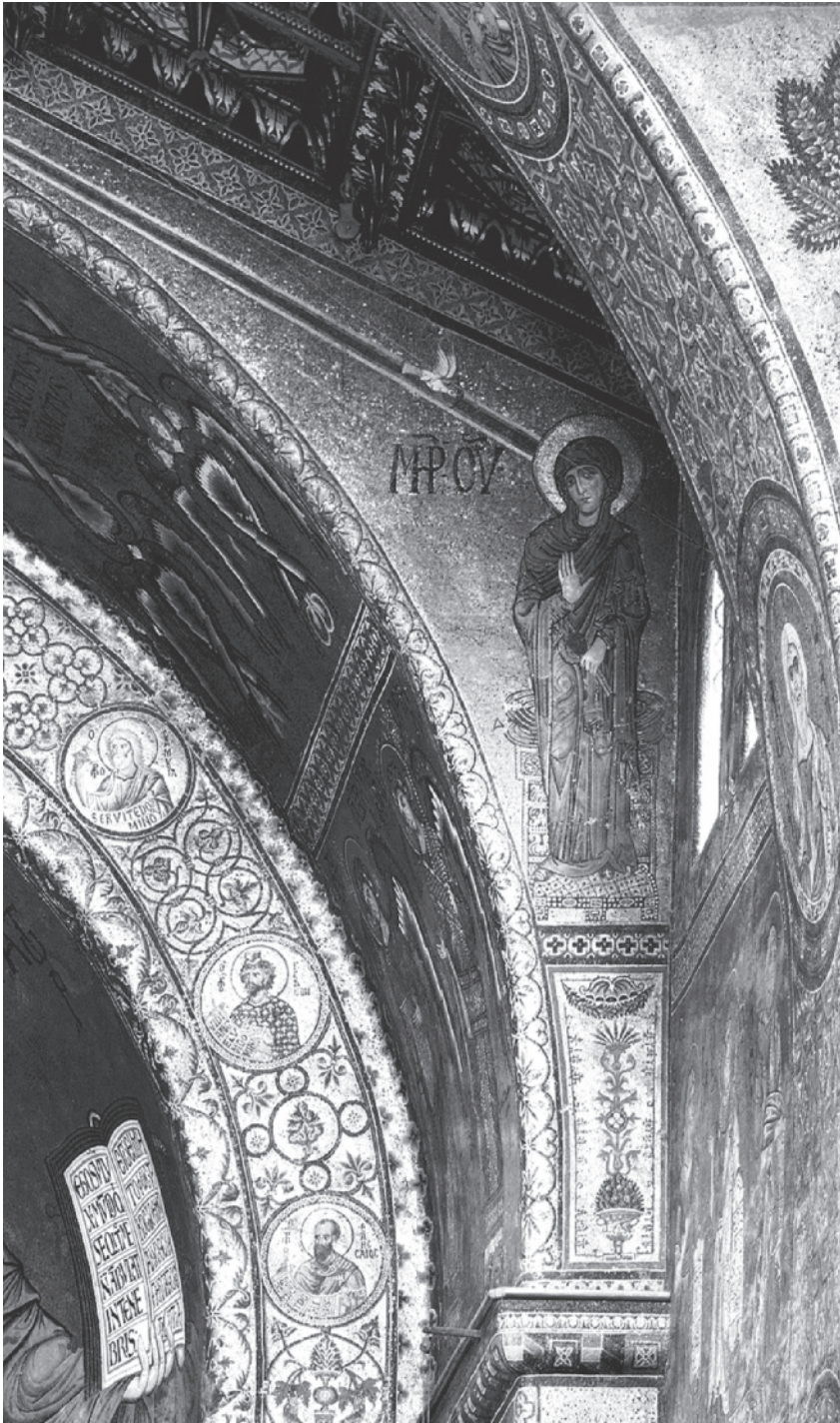


PLATE 3.14 Monreale, Cathedral, wall mosaic. Shell ornament beneath the Virgin of the Annunciation. [Source: Dumbarton Oaks]



PLATE 3.15 Kiti, Panagia Angeloktistos, apse mosaic. Border with fountains. [Source: Henry Maguire]



PLATE 3.16 London, British Museum, gold bracelet. Virgin with *kantharos* and birds. [Source: copyright The Trustees of the British Museum]



PLATE 3.17 Mount Sinai, Monastery of St. Catherine, icon. The Annunciation. [Source: reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria expedition to Mount Sinai]



PLATE 3.18. Moscow, Tretyakov Gallery, icon, detail. The Virgin and Child. [Source: Dumbarton Oaks]



PLATE 3.19 Nerezi, St. Panteleimon, wall painting. The Lamentation, detail. [Source: Bildarchiv Foto Marburg]



PLATE 6.1 Sixth-century icon of the Virgin Mary. [Source: Temple Gallery, London]



PLATE 9.1. Icon from Sinai representing the Virgin *Vrephokratousa* (12th century).

✠ ὁ ἀποχαιρέτισμός τοῦ ἱακωῦ πρὸς ἁλιαν εἰς μεσο-
ποταμίαν: ~



PLATE 9.2 Vaticanus Graecus 1162, fol. 22v. [Source: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana]

✠ τὸς ἰνδ' ὄρας· ὁμοῦς ἦς· καὶ ἡ βλάτος·—

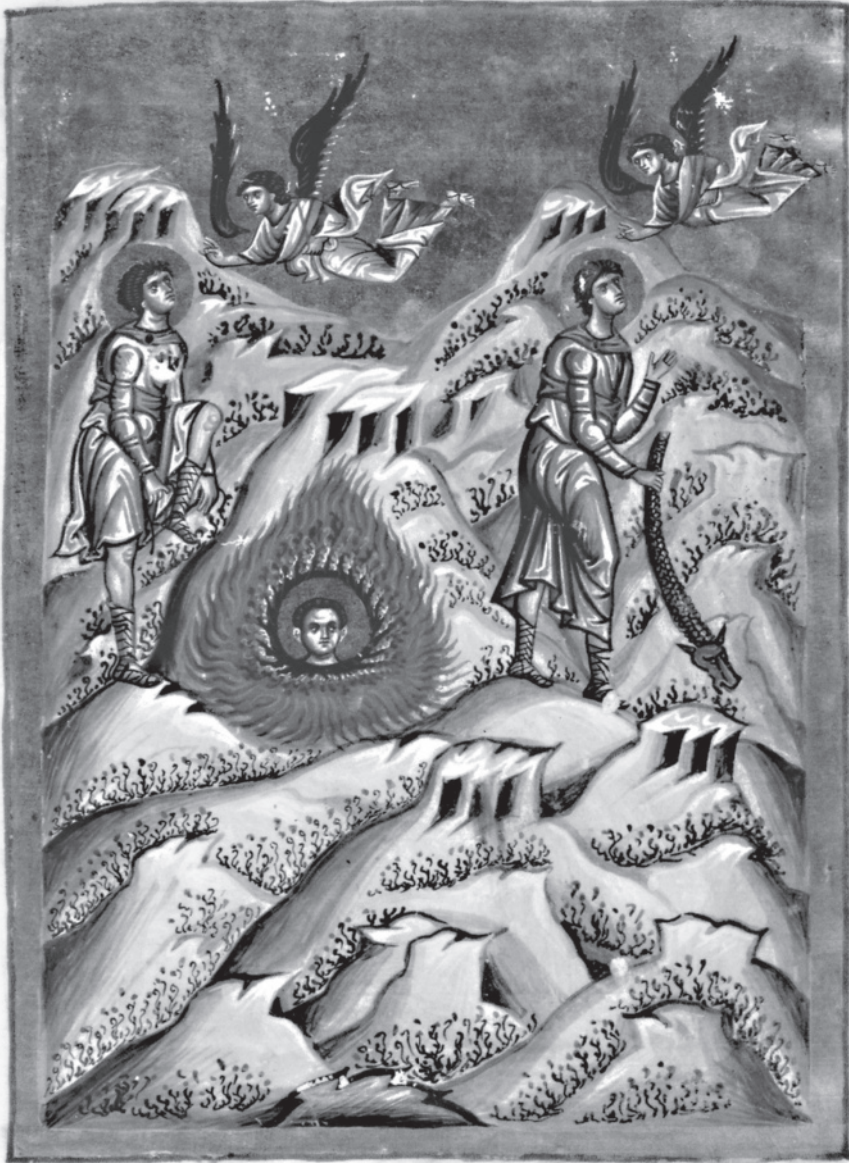


PLATE 9.3 Vaticanus Graecus 1162, fol. 54v. [Source: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana]

✠ ἡ κλίμη τοῦ σολομῶντος ἡ κνκλωδονφορῶν σὶν
εξήκοντα δαυδ τοί: ζήτει τὴν ἐραμηνείδην ὅτι τῶν:-



PLATE 9.4 Vaticanus Graecus 1162, fol. 82v. [Source: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana]

✠ ὅπτα εἰδὴ αἰῶν. ἐωράκοτος τὸν κῆρὶ πῶθρον ὅτ' ἔδρθε ἡ τὸς τῶν ὕ
πρην ῥὲ τῆν ἀνω δία τῶν κεραφῶν, ἐδέξατο δὲ ἡ τὸν θεῖον ἀνάθρακιν.

το τοῦ φέροντος αὐτοῦ. Καὶ εἶπε μὲν ἰδοὺ ἡ
ἔστω τῶν χειλέων σου.



Καὶ ἔφειλε τὰς ἀνομιὰς σου καὶ τὰς ἁ
μαρτίας σου περικαθαρίει. τίμος χρισ
τοῦ οὐκυεμὴ τῆ ἀρεσπιδείσιν χειρὶ τοῦ

PLATE 9.5 Vaticanus Graecus 1162, fol. 119v. [Source: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana]



PLATE 15.1 Hosios Loukas, general view of crypt. [Source: courtesy of Carolyn Connor and Princeton University Press]



PLATE 15.2 Hosios Loukas crypt, south wall of the southeast bay: Entombment. [Source: Dumbarton Oaks]



PLATE 15.3 Koutsovendis (Cyprus), monastery of St John Chrysostomos, burial chapel, north recess: Entombment. [Source: Dumbarton Oaks]



PLATE 15.5 Nerezi, St. Panteleimon, north wall: Entombment. [Source: Dumbarton Oaks]



PLATE 15.7 Kastoria, Church of the Anargyroi, north wall: Entombment. [Source: Nancy Ševčenko]



PLATE 15.8 Kurbinovo, St. George, north wall: Entombment. [Source: Nancy Ševčenko]



PLATE 15.9 Gračanica, south wall of the south arm of the naos: Lamentation. [Source: Dumbarton Oaks]

This is the lived experience found recorded in the many medieval Byzantine tales of visions, apparitions and interventions of Mary: the Mother of God, all-merciful, was constantly on the lookout for her children. From her heavenly home, she interceded constantly for them; as Andrew the Fool heard, she was not averse to forsaking the joys of heaven to go help them on earth; for their sake she would go even into the depths of Hades. Like the bodhisattva Kuan Yin, she was quick to hear and respond to the cries of the distressed, doing whatever it took to finish the job. This is truly the *sensus fidelium* regarding Mary, East and West, and it has never been conveyed more beautifully or simply than in its earliest recorded expression, a third-century Greek papyrus on which this ancient prayer, much prayed in all the Christian languages, is inscribed:

Beneath your compassion, we take refuge, O Theotokos:
do not despise our petitions in time of trouble:
but rescue us from dangers, only pure, only blessed one.⁴³

⁴³ Latin, *Sub tuum praesidium*; Greek, *Hypo ten sen eusplagchnian*; translation (traditional) at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sub_tuum_praesidium; scholarly opinion is divided between a third- or fourth-century date; see O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, 336; also Price, 'The *Theotokos* and the Council of Ephesus', 89–90, and S. Shoemaker, 'The cult of the Virgin in the fourth century', 72–3, both in Maunder, *Origins of the Cult of the Virgin*.

Instances of Marian Self-Revelation in Medieval Greek Sources

[Abbreviations used are listed at the end of the chart; citations aim to give a basic point of entry for the source rather than a comprehensive reference.]

Reference number	Date	Source	Type	Content
		I. Premonition of death and consolation		
1	C6/11	Gregory the Great, <i>Dialogues</i> IV.18, via the <i>Evergetimon</i> I.vii.A.6 (ed. Matthaios 1957, 75)	dream	Musa, a little girl: M. invites her to come to heaven to be with the virgins.
2	C11	Michael Psellos, <i>Funeral Oration on his daughter Styliane</i> (see Talbot 2006, 215, 239 n. 11)	dream	Styliane, eight years old: M. comes into her bedroom, carrying the baby Jesus, and hands her the shorter of two branches.
		II. To confirm veneration offered		
3	C9/10	<i>Letter of the Three Patriarchs</i> S7.3-4 (ed. Munitiz et al. 1997)	vision	M. (in her lifetime).attends the inauguration of her church in Lydda, rejoices at seeing her purple-clad image miraculously and indelibly imprinted on a pillar.
4	C10	Paul of Monembasia, edifying tale no. 14 (W714)	vision	Abess Martha: during Matins on the Dormition, sees M. enthroned in the convent church's sanctuary (until sisters start singing too loudly).

			III. To give a task or commission			
5	C3/4	Gregory of Nyssa, <i>Life of Gregory Thaumaturgos</i> (PG 46, 912)		dream	M. and John the Evangelist appear, larger than life-size, radiant with light; M. through John commands Gregory to write his catechetical treatise, the <i>Ekthesis tēs pisteōs</i> .	
6	C6/10	Romanos the Melodian (later Byz. legend) <i>Synaxarion of Constantinople</i> , 1 Oct. (ed. Delehay 1902, 97)		vision	One Christmas eve, M. hands him scroll to eat; he mounts ambo, sings the first kontakion (on the Nativity).	
7	C6	John Rufus, <i>Plērophoriai</i> , edifying tale (W830)		dream	M. is seen leaving a sanctuary that is about to go back to the dyophysites, in haste, on a white donkey; she tells Themision the priest to follow her shortly, and go to Alexandria.	
			IV. To combat (or avenge) heresy, sacrilege or blasphemy			
8	C7	John Moschos, <i>Spiritual Meadow</i> , no. 46 (W280)		dream	Stately woman in purple warns Kyriakos to get rid of a book in his cell containing treatises by Nestorios: 'How can you ask me to enter your cell when you have my enemy in there?' (trans. Wortley 1992, 37).	
9	C7	John Moschos, <i>Spiritual Meadow</i> , no. 47 (W281)		vengeance	Blasphemous actor, Gaianas: M. warns him three times, then severs his hands and feet (cf. no. 14).	
10	C7	John Moschos, <i>Spiritual Meadow</i> , no. 48 (W282)		apparition	M. 'in visible form' prevents a patrician woman who adheres to the Severan heresy from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: 'Believe me, woman, you shall not come in here until you are in communion with us' (trans. Wortley 1992, 39).	

11	C7	John Moschos, <i>Spiritual Meadow</i> no. 175 (W351)	vengeance	M. appears to woman who wants vengeance against emperor Zeno for wronging her daughter: 'Believe me, woman, I frequently tried to get satisfaction for you, but his [i.e., God's] right hand prevents me' – because of Zeno's almsgiving (trans. Wortley 1992, 144).
12	C7	Anastasios of Sinai, edifying tale no. C05 (W907)	vengeance	M. facilitates crushing to death of a blasphemer through a falling beam.
13	C9/10	<i>Letter of the Three Patriarchs</i> (ed. Munitiz et al. 1997)	vengeance	Holy icons of M. work positive and negative marvels.
14	C9/10	<i>Letter of the Three Patriarchs</i> §7.9 (ed. Munitiz et al. 1997)	vengeance	M. cripples a nobleman in Alexandria who mocked her icon (cf. no. 9).
15	C9/10	<i>Letter of the Three Patriarchs</i> §7.10 (ed. Munitiz et al. 1997)	vengeance	M. abandons a persistent mocker of her icon to capture and execution.
16	C10	V. To help a sinner repent, make amends, obtain forgiveness, or resist temptation <i>Life of Blasios of Amorion</i> (AASS Nov. IV, 663D–E)	dream	Dazzling woman in purple appears to fortify Blasios against carnal thoughts.
17	C11	Legend of Theophilus the Oikonomos (BHG 1319–22) <i>De Theophili paenitentia</i> (W507; ed. Radermacher 1927, 151–257; see also Shinnars 1997, 130–1	apparition or dream	Theophilus sells his soul to the devil (in some versions: a 'Hebrew magician'); renounces Christ / his baptism, Creator, Mary; repents, pleads for M.'s aid, she helps him sort things out, brings him back to reconciliation with God.

18	C4	VI. To heal the sick or possessed			
19	C5/6	Sozomen, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> VII.5.1–4 (ed. Bidez & Hansen 1960, VII.5.1–4)	apparitions	M. appears in Anastaseion church in visions and dreams, healing the sick and distressed.	
20	C7	<i>Transitus Mariae</i> , bk III (ed. Lewis 1902, 49–50)	apparitions	M. appears to many in Rome and Egypt, healing incurable sick (among others; see no. 23, below).	
21	C10	Anastasios of Sinai, edifying tales (W 103, 111)	apparitions	M. appears to facilitate or confirm healing of a paralytic and demoniac.	
22	C14	Anonymous <i>miracula</i> of Pege shrine in CP <i>Diġġesis peri tēs systaseōs tōn en tē Pēgē tēs Theotokou naōn</i> §31, tale of John the protospatharios (AASS Nov. III: 886E–F; see Maguire 1996)	dream	John, incubating in Pege church, sees M. and St Panteleimon discussing his ailment; M. instructs Panteleimon to heal him.	
23	C5/6	Manuel Philes, votive epigrams on the Pege shrine (ed. Talbot 1994, 155)	dream	M. appears to Irene <i>archontissa</i> as dazzling presence to confirm the healing of a chronic headache through the waters of the Pēgē shrine.	
24	C7	VII. To save or defend those in peril			
		<i>Transitus Mariae</i> , bk III (ed. Lewis 1902, 49–50)	apparitions	While lying on her deathbed, M. appears to many in Rome and Egypt, delivers sailors, robbery victims, widow's son fallen into well, incurable sick, the shipwrecked, those menaced by snakes, those who have lost money.	
		chronicles, homilies & <i>miracula</i> (BHG, Maria Deipara II, 8–11)	vision/action	M. defends Constantinople from siege in 626 (through prayers; direct action).	

25	C7	John Moschos, <i>Spiritual Meadow</i> , no. 50 (W284)	vision	Abba George sees purple-clad woman interceding before the throne, to try to prevent an earthquake (without success, because of man's sin and God's wrath).
26	C7	John Moschos, <i>Spiritual Meadow</i> , no. 75 (W293)	action	M. (unseen) blinds a servant who was about to murder his mistress and her child.
27	C7	John Moschos, <i>Spiritual Meadow</i> , no. 243 (W488) (Mioni 12)	apparition	A purple-clad woman (M.) saves a Jewish child who had eaten consecrated bread and was thrown into a furnace by his enraged glassblower father.
28	C8	<i>miracula</i> (BHG, Maria Deipara II, 12)	apparition	M. defends Constantinople against Arabs (717–18) during Leo III's reign.
29	C9	Chalkoprateia miracle narrative (BHG 1075d) (ed. Lackner 1985; see Mango 1994)	apparition	M. saves boy who fell in a well while gazing on her image from drowning.
30	C10	<i>Life of Andrew the Fool</i> (ed. Rydén 1995, 60–1)	vision	Andrew, during heavenly tour, is told that M. is on earth, helping people.
31	C10	John Zonaras, <i>Epitomae historiarum</i> (see Weyl Carr 2000, 337)	apparition	Woman sees M. in the sky, with corps of military saints, led by Sts George and Theodore Stratelates, coming to the aid of the emperor John Tzimiskes about to set off on campaign.
32	C12	Niketas Choniates, <i>Historia</i> (see Weyl Carr 2000, 337)	dream	A contemporary of the emperor Manuel I Komnenos dreams before the battle of Myriokephalon that he heard the icon of the Virgin Kyriotissa pleading with Sts George and Theodore to help the emperor (in vain).
33	C15	<i>miracula</i> (BHG, Maria Deipara II, 12z–14)	apparitions	M. defends Constantinople against Turks.

		VIII. To save those in eschatological peril, through intercession		
34	(C?)	<i>De sorte animarum vision presbyteri Patmensis</i> (W880)	vision/NDE	Abba John of Patmos has NDE vision, sees Mother of God interceding before God (a pillar of flame) for mercy on the world.
35	C9/11	<i>Apocalypse of the Theotokos</i> (trans. Baun 2007, 391–400)	revelation	M. tours the otherworld punishments, intercedes for sinners, obtains concessions.
36	C10/11	<i>Apocalypse of Anastasia</i> (trans. Baun 2007, 401–24)	revelation/NDE	M. constantly interceding before the throne of God, the only hope for sinners.
37	C10	Paul of Monembasia, edifying tale no. 13 (W713) <i>De Mortua ad vitam revocata</i>	NDE	M. intercedes for Anna during her NDE, gains grace of two-months' respite for repentance.

Abbreviations

- Baun 2007 J. Baun, *Tales from Another Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2007).
Bidez & Hanson 1960 *Sozomenus Historia Ecclesiastica* (Berlin, 1960).
C century; e.g., C10 = tenth century
Delehaye 1902 H. Delehaye, ed., *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. Propylaeum ad AASS Novembris* (Brussels, 1902).
Lackner 1985 W. Lackner, 'Ein byzantinisches Marienmirakel', *Vyzantina* 13 (1985), 835–60.
Lewis 1902 A.S. Lewis, ed. and trans., *Apocrypha Syriaca* (London, 1902).
M. Mary, the Mother of God
Maguire 1996 H. Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies: Saints and their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton NJ, 1996).
Mango 1994 C. Mango, 'The Chalkoprateia Annunciation and the Pre-Eternal Logos', *Deltion tēs Christianikēs Archaialogikēs Hetaireias* 4, 17 (1993–94), 165–70.

- Matthaios 1957
 Munitiz et al. 1997
 NDE
 Radermacher 1927
 Rydén 1995
 Shinnars 1997
 Talbot 1994
 Talbot 2006
 Weyl Carr 2000
 W
 Wortley 1992
- V. Matthaios, ed., *Evergetinos ētoi Synagogē ... tomos prōtos*. (Athens, 1957).
 J. Munitiz, et al., ed. and trans., *The Letter of the Three Patriarchs to Emperor Theophilos* (Camberley, Surrey, 1997).
 near-death experience
 L. Radermacher, *Griechische Quellen zur Faustsage* (Vienna, 1927).
 L. Rydén, ed. and trans., *The Life of St. Andrew the Fool* (Uppsala, 1995).
 J. Shinnars, *Medieval Popular Religion 1000–1500: a Reader* (Peterborough ON, 1997).
 A.-M. Talbot, trans., 'Epigrams of Manuel Philes on the Theotokos tes Peges and its Art', *DOP* 48 (1994), 135–65.
 A.-M. Talbot, 'The Devotional Life of Laywomen', in D. Krueger, ed., *Byzantine Christianity* (Minneapolis, 2006), 201–20.
 A. Weyl Carr, 'The Mother of God in Public', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, 325–37 (Athens, 2000).
 Catalogue number in J. Wortley's 'Repertoire of Byzantine "Beneficial Tales"', online @ <http://home.cc.manitoba.ca/~wortley/index.html>
 J. Wortley, trans., *The Spiritual Meadow of John Moschos* (Kalamazoo MI, 1992).

Making the Most of Mary: The Cult of the Virgin in the Chalkoprateia from Late Antiquity to the Tenth Century

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The pivotal role that the Byzantine belief system accorded to the Mother of God found its expression not only in private devotion but also in public celebrations. The development of these celebrations from late antiquity into the Middle Byzantine period has been the subject of several studies by Jugie, Wenger and Kishpaug.¹ However, these authors were primarily interested in establishing pedigrees for contemporary Catholic feasts and paid little attention to the specific social contexts in which their development took place. In this chapter I attempt to fill this gap by focusing on the Constantinopolitan church of Mary in the Chalkoprateia and on the patriarchal clergy that administered it. Through analysis of liturgical, homiletic and hymnographical sources I seek to demonstrate that members of this clergy invented and propagated new celebrations as a means to establish their church as the foremost Marian shrine in the capital against its main rival, the Church of Mary in the Blachernai.

The last centuries of late antiquity saw a rapid development of the cult of Mary, which led to the establishment of four universally recognised feasts celebrating significant events in her life.² Two of these feasts, the Annunciation on 25 March, and Presentation (*Hypapante* or Candlemass) on 2 February, focused on Mary's relationship with her son Jesus Christ. Based on episodes

¹ M. Jugie, *L'Immaculée Conception dans l'Écriture Sainte et dans la tradition orientale* (Rome: Officium Libri Catholici, 1952); *idem*, *La mort et l'assomption de la Sainte Vierge: étude historico-doctrinale*, ST 114 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944); A. Wenger, *L'assomption de la très sainte Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VIe au Xe siècle: études et documents*, Archives de l'Orient Chrétien 5 (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1955); M.J. Kishpaugh, *The Feast of the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple: An Historical and Literary Study* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1941).

² On the cult of Mary in Constantinople in general see C. Mango, 'Constantinople as Theotokoupolis', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Milan and Athens, 2000), 17–25, and A. Cameron, 'The Theotokos in sixth-century Constantinople: a city finds its symbol', *JTS* 29 (1978), 79–108.

in the Gospel of Luke, they had as their themes Mary's conception after her notification by the archangel Gabriel, and her purification on the fortieth day after giving birth when she and her son encountered the prophet Symeon in the temple.³ Their rise to prominence dates to the middle of the sixth century when Justinian decreed that they should be celebrated on the same days in all parts of the empire,⁴ and when we find the first homilies and hymns that were specifically written for them.⁵ The other two feasts, her Nativity on 8 September and her Dormition (*Koimesis*) on 15 August, were more specifically linked to Mary as a person. Derived from two apocryphal texts, the *Protevangelion* attributed to James, the 'brother of the Lord', and the account of the Dormition allegedly written by John the Evangelist, they originated in Jerusalem where Mary was reputed to have been born and to have died.⁶ Late sources claim that

³ For a first orientation see R.F. Taft and A. Weyl Carr, 'Hypapante', *ODB*, vol. 2, 961–2, and R.F. Taft and A. Weyl Carr, 'Annunciation', *ODB*, vol. 1, 106–7. See also C. Maggioni, *Annunciazione: storia, eucologia, teologia liturgica*, Bibliotheca 'Ephemerides liturgicae', Subsidia 56 (Rome, 1991); and W. Pax and H. Brakmann, 'Hypapante', *RAC* 16 (1994), 946–56.

⁴ See M. van Esbroeck, 'La lettre de l'empereur Justinien sur l'annonciation et la Noël en 561', *AnalBoll* 86 (1968), 355–62; and Pax and Brakmann, 'Hypapante', 949, who consider 561/2 to be the most likely date. The Presentation was already firmly established in Jerusalem (albeit on 14 February) and at least known in Antioch (on 2 February) before its formal recognition: see Pax and Brakmann, 'Hypapante', 948. It was also the first feast to be adopted in the West; see A. Chavasse, *Le Sacramentaire gélasien*, Bibliothèque de Théologie IV.1 (Paris, 1958), 379–80. For the spread of the feast of the Annunciation to Antioch and Jerusalem in the later sixth century see R.A. Fletcher, 'Celebrations at Jerusalem on March 25th in the sixth century A.D.', in F.L. Cross, ed., *Papers Presented to the Third International Conference on Patristic Studies, Studia Patristica* 5 (Berlin, 1962), 30–4, and *idem*, 'Three early Byzantine hymns and their place in the liturgy of the Church of Constantinople', *BZ* 51 (1958), 53–65, esp. 60. In the West it took another century for the feast to be recognised; see Chavasse, *Sacramentaire*, 380.

⁵ Sermons on the Presentation (BHG 1954; CPG 7381) and Annunciation (BHG 1136; CPG 7380) were composed by the metropolitan Abraham of Ephesos in the mid-sixth century, ed. M. Jugie, 'Abraham d'Éphèse et ses écrits', *BZ* 22 (1913), 37–59. The first extant hymns are Romanos's kontakia on the Presentation, no. 4, and on the Annunciation, nos 36 and 37, in P. Maas and C.A. Trypanis, eds, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica genuina* (Oxford, 1963), 26–34, 280–93.

⁶ For these texts see É. Amann, *Le Protévangile de Jacques et ses remaniements latins* (Paris, 1910); and *Apocryphum de Dormitione* (BHG 1056d), ed. Wenger, *L'assomption de la très sainte Vierge*, 209–41. For the Dormition see R.F. Taft and A. Weyl Carr, 'Dormition', *ODB*, vol. 1, 651–2, with older secondary literature. S.J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford, 2002), is confined to the early period and does not deal with the later development. For the Nativity of Mary see R.F. Taft and A. Weyl Carr, 'Birth of the Virgin', *ODB*, vol. 1, 291, who aver that it was first celebrated in Jerusalem in the fifth century. A more cautious approach is taken by A. Raes, 'Aux origines de la fête de l'Assomption en Orient', *OCP* 12 (1946), 262–74, esp. 267–8, who points out that while the church in the Probatike was already known in the fifth century the first mention of Mary in this context dates only to c. 530. Both feasts were certainly firmly established in the eighth century, see M. Tarnichsvili, *Le grand lectionnaire de l'église de Jérusalem*, CSCO 205, *Scriptores Iberici* 14 (2 vols, Louvain, 1960), vol. 2, 27 and 35.

emperor Maurice prescribed 15 August as the date of the Dormition for the whole empire, and a festal homily by John, the metropolitan of Thessalonike, attests to its spread in the early seventh century.⁷ Much less is known about the introduction of the feast of Mary's Nativity. We have no information about imperial intervention, and literary sources do not provide us with a clear picture.⁸ The oldest extant text is a hymn by Romanos the Melodist, which explicitly refers to a feast and thus appears to indicate that in Constantinople Mary's Nativity was already celebrated in the mid-sixth century.⁹ However, in contrast to the three other feasts no sermons are attested for the next century and the only other early information we have is a reference to the date of Mary's birth in the *Chronicon Paschale*.¹⁰ Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that by the end of the seventh century a system of four great Marian feasts had emerged.¹¹ The status quo is reflected in the decree by pope Sergius (687–701) that on the feasts of the Annunciation, Presentation, Nativity and Dormition, processions should go from Sant'Adriano to Santa Maria Maggiore, the main Marian shrine in Rome.¹²

This arrangement was clearly based on a Constantinopolitan precedent. In his account of the reign of emperor Maurice the historian Theophylaktos

⁷ Nicephori Callisti Xanthopuli *Historia Ecclesiastica*, XVII.28, PG 147, col. 292A–B: τάττει δὲ (sc. Ἰουστινιανός) καὶ τὴν τοῦ Σωτῆρος ὑπαπαντὴν ἄρτι πρῶτως ἀπανταχοῦ τῆς γῆς ἐορτάζεσθαι, ὡσπερ Ἰουστίνος τὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀγίαν γέννησιν· καὶ Μαυρίκιος οὐ πολλῶ ὕστερον, τὴν τῆς πανάγνου καὶ θεομήτορος κοίμησιν, κατὰ τὴν πεντεκαίδεκάτην τοῦ Αὐγούστου μηνός. See John of Thessalonike, *In dormitionem* (BHG 1144; CPG 7924), ed. M. Jugie, *Homélies mariales byzantines*, vol. 2, PO 19 (1926), 375–403, and further, Theoteknos of Livias, *In dormitionem* (BHG 1083n; CPG 7418), ed. Wenger, *L'assomption de la très sainte Vierge*, 217–91; commentary on 96–110, esp. 103, where Wenger dates the text to c. 550–650.

⁸ The meagre evidence is collected in J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'empire byzantin et en occident*, Académie royale de Belgique. Mémoires de la classe des Beaux-Arts, 2 série, XI.3 (2 vols, Brussels, 2nd edn, 1992), vol. 1, 89–121, esp. 26.

⁹ Romanos, Kontakion on the Nativity of Mary, ed. Maas and Trypanis, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica*, no. 35, 276–80, esp. 276.3–4: ἐν τῇ ἀγίᾳ γεννήσει σου· αὐτὴν ἐορτάζει καὶ ὁ λαός σου.

¹⁰ *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. L. Dindorf (Bonn, 1832), vol. 1, 366: ἐπὶ τούτων τῶν ὑπάτων μηνὶ σεπτεμβρίῳ ἡ ἡμέρα β' ἰνδ. ιε' ἐγεννήθη ἡ δέσποινα ἡμῶν ἡ θεοτόκος ἀπὸ Ἰωακείμ καὶ Ἄννης.

¹¹ According to Chavasse, the Nativity of Mary was the last of the four Marian feasts to be introduced in Rome; see Chavasse, *Sacramentaire gélasien*, 375–402, esp. 379–80, at least fifty years later than the Dormition. For the introduction to Rome of the other three feasts, see the previous footnotes.

¹² *Liber pontificalis* 86.14, ed. L. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire* (2 vols, 1886–92), vol. 1, 376: *Constituit autem in diebus Adnuntiationis Domini, Dormitionis et Natiuitatis sanctae Dei genetricis semperque virginis Mariae ac sancti Symeonis, quod Ypapanti Greci appellant, ut letania exeat a sancto Hadriano et ad sanctam Mariam populus occurrat*; trans. R. Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis). The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to A.D. 715*, TTH 6 (Liverpool, 1989), 89. See R. Messner, 'Maria III. Maria in der Liturgie', *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 6 (1993), 249–51.

Simokatta records that on the day of the Presentation a public procession went from the centre of the city to the church of Mary in the Blachernai outside the land walls where the feast was then celebrated in the presence of the emperor.¹³ And according to Theophanes the same emperor instituted a similar public procession to the Blachernai for the Commemoration (*Mneme*) of Mary, which is most likely to be identified with the feast of the Dormition.¹⁴ These arrangements survived and were still in place in the post-iconoclastic period. This is evident from the *Typikon* of the Great Church, a manual for the celebration of feasts and commemorations throughout the year, and from *De cerimoniis*, a handbook of imperial ritual commissioned by Emperor Constantine VII.¹⁵ The *Typikon* mentions that on the feasts of the Presentation and Dormition the patriarch went in procession from Hagia Sophia to the Blachernai and *De cerimoniis* attests to imperial attendance.¹⁶ As the major Marian shrine in Constantinople, the church in the Blachernai had a very similar status to that of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome: a late antique encomiast

¹³ *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae*, VIII.4.11–13, ed. C. de Boor and P. Wirth (Stuttgart, 2nd edn, 1972), 291.8–25: τῆ τεσσαρακοστῆ ἡμέρᾳ προελθούσης τῆς γενεθλιακῆς πανηγύρεως τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ ... καταστασιάζει τὰ πλήθη τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος· εἰώθει δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς συνορτάζειν τοῖς δήμοις· ... καὶ οὖν ὁ βασιλεὺς ὑπὸ τῶν σωματοφυλάκων διασώζεται μὴ δεδωκῶς ἐγκοπὴν τῷ λιτανεύματι· εἶτα πρὸς τὸν τῆς θεομήτορος νεῶν παρεγένετο ὄν Λακέρνας ἀποκαλοῦσι τιμῶντες Βυζάντιοι. See Pax and Brakmann, 'Hyparante', 948.

¹⁴ *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (2 vols, Leipzig, 1883–85), vol. 1, 265.29–66.2 (AM 6090): Τῷ δὲ αὐτῷ ἔτει κατέδειξεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Μαυρίκιος γενέσθαι εἰς τὴν μνήμην τῆς ἀγίας θεοτόκου τὴν λιτὴν ἐν Βλαχέρναις καὶ ἐγκώμια λέγειν τῆς δεσποίνης ὀνομάσας αὐτὴν πανήγυριν. For identification of this feast as that of the Dormition see C. Mango and R. Scott, trans., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern history, AD 284–813* (Oxford and New York, 1997), 389, n. 18: 'Probably this is to be connected to Maurice's introduction of the feast of the Assumption on 15 Aug.' The use of the term 'commemoration' (i.e. of Mary's death) instead of Dormition suggests an early source, see Jugie, *La mort et l'assomption*, 183. Maurice also built the church in Jerusalem that provided the locale for the celebration of the Dormition, see Tarnichschvili, *Grand lectionnaire*, vol. 2, 27: *In Mauricii regis aedificio, in Gesamenia, commemoratio sanctae Deiparae*. See also R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin, I, Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique*, 3, *Les églises et les monastères* (Paris, 1969), 167, who erroneously identifies this ceremony with the procession at the Chalkoprateia that patriarch Timothy instituted in the early sixth century, see below note 25.

¹⁵ Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, *Le livre des cérémonies I: Livre 1, chapitres 1–46* (37), ed. A. Vogt, Collection Byzantine (Paris, 1935). The oldest stratum of the *typikon* is represented by two manuscripts, H, ed. J. Mateos, *Le Typicon de la Grande Église*, Ms. Sainte-Croix no. 40, Xe siècle, OCA 165–6 (2 vols, Rome, 1962–63), and P, ed. A.A. Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie liturgiĭeskikh rukopisej hranjaščihsj v bibliotekah pravoslavnago vostoka* (3 vols, Kiev, 1895–1917, repr. Hildesheim, 1965), vol. 1, 1–152. For the dates of the archetypes, see Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, xvii–xviii. The earlier calendar edited by Morcelli does not identify cult sites; see S.A. Morcelli, ed., *Kalendarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (2 vols, Rome, 1788).

¹⁶ For the Presentation, see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 219.16–20, 222.20–2, and Vogt, *De ceremoniis* I.1, vol. 1, 20.30–26.11. For the Dormition of Mary, see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 368.11–17, and Vogt, *De ceremoniis* I. 46 (37), vol. 1, 177.12–17.

calls it the head and metropolis of all Marian churches in the capital.¹⁷ Built by Justin I and Justinian and later renovated and embellished by Justin II and his wife Sophia,¹⁸ it was administered by an impressive number of clerics.¹⁹ It was the locale for several feasts,²⁰ and it possessed a major Marian relic, the wonderworking robe of the Virgin, which in the seventh century became closely associated with the defence of the city.²¹ However, unlike Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, the church in the Blachernai did not have a monopoly on feasts of Mary: it only hosted the Presentation and Dormition whereas the other two feasts, the Annunciation and Nativity, were celebrated in another Marian church, which was situated in the quarter of the Chalkoprateia near Hagia Sophia. From the *Typikon* of the Great Church and from the *De ceremoniis*, we learn that on these feasts processions went from Hagia Sophia first to the forum and then back to the Chalkoprateia and that the patriarch performed the service there in the presence of the emperor.²²

Like the Blachernai, the church in the Chalkoprateia was a late antique foundation: it was built in the late fifth century by empress Verina and was then renovated by Justin II, who furthermore added to it another church dedicated to St James.²³ Unfortunately, the *Typikon* and *De ceremoniis* are the earliest sources

¹⁷ Theodore Synkellos, *Inventio et depositio vestis in Blachernis* (BHG 1058; CPG 7935), ed. F. Combefis, *Historia haeresis Monothelitarum*, Bibliothecae Patrum Novum Auctarium (Paris, 1648), 751–86, esp. 754D.

¹⁸ I am following the interpretation of C. Mango, 'The origins of the Blachernae shrine at Constantinople', in N. Cambi and E. Marin, eds, *Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologicae Christianae*, Studi di antichità cristiana pubblicati a cura del pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana 54 (3 vols, Vatican City and Split, 1998), vol. 2, 61–76.

¹⁹ It is referred to as 'great church': see Janin, *Églises et monastères*, 166. The staff list is found in a constitution of Herakleios from 619: see I. and P. Zepos, eds, *Jus graeco-romanum* (8 vols, Athens, 1931), vol. 1, 29–30, and Janin, *Églises et monastères*, 170.

²⁰ Theodore Synkellos, *Inventio*, ed. Combefis, *Historia haeresis Monothelitarum*, 755A: patriarchs, emperors, dignitaries and ordinary people go to Blachernai to give thanks; 771C: several annual feasts of Mary are celebrated in the Blachernai.

²¹ See A. Cameron, 'The Virgin's robe: an episode in the history of early seventh-century Constantinople', *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 42–56.

²² For Annunciation see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 252.28–254.10, and Vogt, *De ceremoniis* I.1, vol. 1, 26.22–31, and I.46 (37), *ibid.*, 178.30–179.5. For the Nativity of Mary, see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 18.8–10, 20.7–11 and Vogt, *De ceremoniis* I.36 (27), vol. 1, 136.1–142.32; I.46 (37), *ibid.*, 177.18–27. In the case of the Annunciation, *De ceremoniis* differs from the *Typikon* of the Great Church. It claims that the feast was only celebrated in the Chalkoprateia when it fell on a Sunday and that otherwise the patriarch remained in Hagia Sophia: see C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 3 (Cambridge MA, 1958), 138, who also points out that Photios pronounced his sermon on the Annunciation in Hagia Sophia.

²³ Verina is mentioned as founder in Justinian's *Novella* 3, ed. K.E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, *Imperatoris Iustiniani Novellae quae vocantur* (Leipzig, 1881), vol. 1, 70. Later sources suggest an earlier date. The previous discussion about the foundation of the church is summarised in A. Panayotov, 'The synagogue in the copper market of Constantinople: a note on the Christian attitudes toward Jews in the fifth century', *OCP* 68 (2002), 319–34. On Justin II and Sophia, see A. Cameron, 'The artistic patronage of Justin II', *Byzantion* 50 (1980), 62–84, esp. 78.

that localise the Annunciation and the Nativity of Mary in the Chalkoprateia.²⁴ However, it is likely that this custom goes back at least to the seventh century since the stipulations concerning these two feasts mirror in all respects those for the feasts of the Blachernai church,²⁵ and a description of its pre-iconoclastic decorative programme mentions an Annunciation scene in the apse and a life cycle of Mary that began with her birth on the walls of the nave.²⁶

We can conclude that the two churches of the Chalkoprateia and the Blachernai functioned as two complementary foci of the Marian cult in the capital.²⁷ This bipolarity is a particular feature of medieval Constantinople, which finds its expression in many texts of the time. Here I will only mention the reputed last speech of Constantine V in which he bids farewell to Hagia Sophia, to the Holy Apostles and to each of the two Marian churches,²⁸ and the liturgical arrangements for Easter week in the Typikon of the Great Church where celebrations in Hagia Sophia on Sunday and in the Holy Apostles on Monday are followed by two subsequent feast days of Mary in the Blachernai and in the Chalkoprateia.²⁹ The relation between the two churches was by no

²⁴ According to a fragment of Theodore Lector's *Church History*, Patriarch Timothy had already instituted a weekly procession of the Virgin at the Chalkoprateia at the beginning of the sixth century; see PG 86, col. 200A–B: τὰς κατὰ παρασκευὴν λιτὰς, ἐν τῷ ναῶ τῆς θεοτόκου ἐν τοῖς Χαλκοπρατείοις Τιμόθεος ἐπενόησε γίνεσθαι. Contrary to Janin, *Églises et monastères*, 167, there is no reference to the Blachernai in this context.

²⁵ We shall see that later Marian feasts did not attain this status.

²⁶ The description is found in the account of a miracle that reputedly took place c. 800; see W. Lackner, 'Ein Byzantinisches Marienmirakel', *Byzantina* 13.2 (1985), 835–60. See C. Mango, 'The Chalkoprateia Annunciation and the pre-eternal Logos', *DChAE* 17 (1993–94), 165–70, esp. 163–6, who identifies the depiction of Mary and Gabriel as an Annunciation and accepts the information that it was placed in the apse. He admits that there is no evidence to back up the claim that it dates to the reign of Justin II but avers that such a date makes 'good sense'. P. Speck, *Anthologia Palatinae I*, 1 und das Apsis-Mosaik der Hagia Sophia, mit vier Addenda: 1. Die Bilderschriften angeblich des Epiphanius von Salamis, 2. Der Dialog mit einem Juden angeblich des Leontios von Neapolis, 3. Die Darstellungen in der Apsis der Chalkoprateia-Kirche, 4. Ta hiera – Eine Stiftung des Artabasdos', *Varia II* (Bonn, 1987), 285–329, esp. 322–3, doubts the reliability of the source, which he considers to be late. He thinks that the Annunciation was depicted on the triumphal arch and not in the apse. However, this is contradicted by the information that the scene was replaced with a cross. For depictions of Mary in apses see also Ch. Belting-Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei: vom 4. Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts* (2nd edn, Stuttgart, 1992), 57–68, on 'Marienmajestas': all examples show Mary with attendant angels and not a narrative scene, which would make the Chalkoprateia extraordinary indeed.

²⁷ There were, of course, numerous other Marian churches in the capital, which are listed by Janin. However, in the Typikon of the Great Church they only appear in the context of feasts of dedication.

²⁸ *Georgii Cedrenii Historiarum Compendium*, ed. I. Bekker (2 vols, Bonn, 1838–39), vol. 2, 18.6–9: σώζου ὁ ναὸς ὁ μέγας ἡ ἀγία σοφία· σώζου ὁ ναὸς τῆς παναγίας θεοτόκου τῶν Βλαχερνῶν· σώζου ὁ ναὸς τῆς θεοτόκου ἐν τοῖς Χαλκοπρατείοις· σώζου ὁ ναὸς τῶν ἀγίων ἀποστόλων.

²⁹ H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 2, 96.16 – 102.15; P in Dmitrievskij, ed., *Opsanie*, vol. 1, 138. There can be no doubt that originally the whole week after was dedicated to the apostles and that Mary is a late intrusion. Moreover, it is likely that the second

means static: the sources show that the church in the Chalkoprateia actively competed with its counterpart in the Blachernai. The most blatant example of such competition was its acquisition during the reign of Justinian of a Marian relic, the girdle of the Virgin, evidently so as to have a counterpart to the robe in the Blachernai.³⁰ Another instance of rivalry is revealed through analysis of the festal calendar. According to the Typikon of the Great Church, the Service (*Synaxis*) of the Theotokos on 26 December, the day after Christmas, was celebrated with a public procession to the Blachernai. The Chalkoprateia, on the other hand, provided the locale for the commemoration of Christ's human father Joseph, his brother James and his ancestor David on the Sunday after Christmas.³¹ It is evident that this moveable feast falls at regular intervals on 26 December where it then competes with the Marian feast in the Blachernai.³² A look into the historical background of both celebrations reveals the significance of this overlap. Before the Annunciation was introduced, the service on 26 December was the major Constantinopolitan feast of Mary.³³ By contrast, the commemoration of James and David was imported from Palestine, most likely when the relics of James, Symeon and Zachariah were brought from Jerusalem to the Chalkoprateia in the third quarter of the sixth century.³⁴ In

Marian celebration was introduced at a later date than the first one: in the Typikon of the Great Church it shares its day with Stephen. Unfortunately, H and P disagree on the locales. Whereas H gives the Tuesday to the Blachernai and the Wednesday to the Chalkoprateia, P reverses this order. However, it is likely that H is correct here because the information squares with that found in Vogt, *De ceremoniis* I, 20 (11), 81: χρὴ δὲ εἶδέναι καὶ τοῦτο, ὅτι ταύτη τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἀπέρχεται ὁ πατριάρχης ἐν Βλαχέρναις μετὰ λιτῆς, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ οὐχ εὐρίσκεται εἰς τὴν προέλευσιν ταύτην. In this case the Blachernai would have led and the Chalkoprateia would have followed suit.

³⁰ S in H. Delehaye, ed., *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris (Brussels, 1902), 935.1–936.2: ἡ ἀνάμνησις τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀγίᾳ σορῶ καταθέσεως τῆς τιμίας ζώνης τῆς ὑπεραγίας θεοτόκου ἐν τῷ σεβασμῷ αὐτῆς οἴκῳ τῷ ὄντι ἐν τοῖς Χαλκοπρατείοις ἀνακομισθείσης ἀπὸ τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς Ζήλας ἐπὶ τοῦ εὐσεβοῦς βασιλέως Ἰουστινιανοῦ. This information is not provided in P; in H the relevant pages are missing. The earliest secure evidence for the presence of the girdle is a sermon by Patriarch Germanos (see below). There is no evidence for its existence in the sixth and seventh centuries, but there is no reason to doubt the dating of the translation to the reign of Justinian, especially since the Chalkoprateia also acquired other relics during that period. On the girdle in general, see M. Jugie, 'L'église de Chalcooprateia et le culte de la ceinture de la sainte vierge à Constantinople', *EO* 16 (1913), 308–12.

³¹ H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 160.20–23.

³² See, for example, the Casole Typikon in Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 814, which stipulates that the service of the relatives of Christ is to be omitted when the day falls on 26 December.

³³ See N. Constat, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity. Homilies 1–5, Texts and Translations* (Leiden, 2003), 194. This feast was inserted into an older system, attested in Anatolia, Syria and the west in the early fifth century, that had Stephen on 26, James and John on 27, and Peter and Paul on 28, with the effect that Stephen was moved to 27 December, see Baumstark, 'Begleitfeste', 83.

³⁴ For a discussion of the evidence see J. Noret and H. Gaspart, *A Eulogy of James the Brother of God by Pseudo-Andrew of Crete with an Ancient Paraphrase of the Catholic Epistle of Saint James*. Edition, translation and critical notes (Toronto, 1978), 90–100.

Palestine James and David were commemorated on 26 December, on the same day on which Constantinople celebrated Mary as the Mother of God.³⁵ Liturgical sources from Syria attest to a clash between the two systems,³⁶ and thus it is arguable that the Chalkoprateia originally promoted this feast as a rival to the service in the Blachernai.

What are the reasons for this rivalry? To answer this question we need to consider that, unlike the Blachernai, the Chalkoprateia was not an independent institution but had been donated by Verina to the Great Church from where it was administered.³⁷ As a consequence, its development as a cult centre must be seen in close connection with the interests and policies of the patriarchate and the patriarchal clergy.³⁸ What this may have meant becomes clearer when we extend the discussion to another satellite of the Great Church, namely the church of St Theodore, which had been donated to it by its founder Sphorakios at about the same time as Verina had made her gift of the church in the Chalkoprateia.³⁹ From the Typikon of the Great Church we learn that in the ninth century the patriarch celebrated all feasts of John the Baptist in a chapel dedicated to him inside St Theodore: his Service (*Synaxis*) on the day after the feast of Christ's Baptism, his Conception, his Birth, his Beheading and the Invention of his Head.⁴⁰ All of these feasts already existed in late antiquity and the practice may well go back to the sixth century.⁴¹ The focus on St Theodore had an obvious consequence: it excluded patriarchal participation

³⁵ See A. Baumstark, 'Begleitfeste', *RAC* 2 (1954), 78–92, esp. 86. This is still the case in the Palestino-Georgian Calendar; see G. Garitte, ed. and trans., *Le calendrier palestino-géorgien du Sinaiticus 34 (X^e siècle)*, SubsHag 30 (Brussels, 1958), 112.24. The original date was 25 December; it was moved to 26 December when Christmas was introduced.

³⁶ Baumstark, 'Begleitfeste', 87: 'Noch in, allerdings siegreicher, Konkurrenz mit der Feier des Herrenbruders und Davids steht das Marienfest im Vat. Syr. 21 und im jakobitischen Kalender Nau IX.'

³⁷ See Justinian's *Novella* 3 in Zachariae von Lingenthal, *Imperatoris Iustiniani Novellae*, vol. 1, 70.

³⁸ This was already pointed out by Mango, 'Pre-eternal Logos', 163.

³⁹ Sphorakios/Sparakios is almost certainly identical with Sporakios, the consul of 452: see A.H.M. Jones, J. Morris and J.R. Martindale, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (3 vols, Oxford, 1971–92), vol. 2, 1026–7; for Verina (d. c. 484), see Jones, Morris and Martindale, *Prosopography*, vol. 2, 1156.

⁴⁰ Service on 7 January: see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 188.13–14; Conception on 23 September: H in *ibid.*, 42.11–14; Nativity on 24 June: H in *ibid.*, 318.3–6 (with procession); Beheading on 29 August: H in *ibid.*, 386.6–9 (with procession); the Invention of the Head on 24 February: H in *ibid.*, 238.10–13; and the celebration on the Saturday after Easter: H in *ibid.*, 106.20–1; in each case with the reference, ἐν τοῖς Σπαρακίου.

⁴¹ See A. Cardinali, 'Giovanni Battista', *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 6 (1965), 599–624, esp. 606–10, for late antique references to the feasts of the Nativity and the Beheading. According to J. Irmscher, A. Kazhdan, R.F. Taft and A. Weyl Carr, 'John the Baptist', *ODB*, vol. 2, 1068–9, the feast of the Conception was the earliest feast celebrated in Constantinople coinciding with the old date for the New Year. See also J. Ernst, 'Johannes der Täufer', *RAC* 18 (1996), 516–34, esp. 530–1, who regards 7 January as the oldest feast.

in simultaneous celebrations in the great number of churches in the capital that had the Baptist as their patron.⁴² We can conclude that the patriarchate strove to monopolise the cult of this greatest Christian saint and that it used for this purpose a building in its possession.⁴³ I will argue that the patriarchate treated the Chalkoprateia in a similar fashion, promoting it as the cult site for feasts of Mary within the complex of Hagia Sophia.⁴⁴ However, in this case the monopolisation was not complete because the Chalkoprateia had to share the cake with the Blachernai; moreover, one gets a distinct sense that the Chalkoprateia came second: this can be seen not only in the wrangling about what was celebrated, and where, on 26 December, but also in the distribution of the two feasts of the Nativity and Dormition of Mary since there can be no doubt that the Dormition was by far the more important event.⁴⁵

This imbalance, however, was to be redressed over the following centuries. The first indication of a change is the rise in prominence of the celebration of the Nativity of Mary in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. During these years, Andrew of Crete wrote not only three sermons on the Dormition,

⁴² See R. Janin, 'Les églises Byzantines du Précurseur à Constantinople', *EO* 37 (1938), 312–51.

⁴³ This does not mean that there were no such celebrations: according to *De ceremoniis*, the emperor went to Stoudios for the commemoration of John's beheading, see J.J. Reiske, ed., *De ceremoniis* II.13 (Bonn, 1829), 562.8–563.22. A similar pattern is found for Good Friday, when the emperor went to the Blachernai and the patriarch celebrated the service in Hagia Irene; see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 2, 78.29–30.

⁴⁴ From the *Typikon*, a pattern emerges for celebrations in the complex of the Great Church. Hagia Sophia hosts all feasts of Christ – Christmas, Circumcision, Epiphany, Transfiguration, Palm Sunday, Easter and Ascension – as well as Pentecost and the Exaltation of the Cross, whereas the two sanctuaries of Mary and of John the Baptist host the feasts of these saints. Only the Annunciation does not fit into this pattern; see above note 22.

⁴⁵ To judge by the silence of sixth- and seventh-century sources, the Nativity of Mary was also much less important in popular devotion than her Dormition. The celebrations of Mary's Nativity suffered from the vicinity of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on 14 September. As a consequence, Mary's Nativity did not have a full octave as did the Dormition: see Evergetis in Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 269, 493, and A. Luzzi, 'Il calendario eortologico per il ciclo delle feste fisse del tipico di S. Nicola di Casole', *RSBN*, n. s. 39 (2002), 229–61, esp. 241, 260–1, for the *typika* of Casole, Patirion and Messina: end of the celebrations of Nativity of Mary on 13 September, the fifth day after the feast, end of celebrations of Dormition on 23 August, the eighth day after the feast. Moreover, in Constantinople, the feast of the Exaltation was preceded by four days on which the True Cross was displayed for veneration, see Morcelli, ed., *Kalendarium*, vol. 1, 19–20, and Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 24.1–3, 8–9, 19–20 and 26.1–2, so that effectively it had only one afterfeast, the commemoration of Mary's parents on 9 December. The situation was somewhat different in the East. The Palestino-Georgian calendar of John Zosimos has full octaves both for the Dormition, until 22 August, and for the Nativity of Mary, until 15 September, see Garitte, *Calendrier palestino-géorgien*, 84–5, 89–90. Significantly, in early medieval France, Candlemass and the Dormition were of much greater importance than the Annunciation and Birth: see D. Iorga-Prat, 'Le culte de la vierge sous le règne de Charles de Chauve', in D. Iorga-Prat, É. Palazzo and D. Russo, eds, *Marie. Le culte de la vierge dans la société médiévale* (Paris, 1996), 65–98, esp. 80–2.

but also a triad on the Nativity of Mary, the first surviving sermons for this occasion, which put the two feasts on a par.⁴⁶ It is evident that the Chalkoprateia would have benefited from this development.⁴⁷ Unfortunately Andrew does not volunteer information about the place of delivery and only the wide distribution of these speeches in Byzantine manuscripts suggests that they went into circulation in the capital.⁴⁸ As a consequence a closer link with the Chalkoprateia must remain conjecture.

Equally crucial for the rise in status of the Chalkoprateia was the emergence of a whole swathe of new Marian feasts. In addition to the four feasts that we have been focusing on so far, the Typikon of the Great Church lists two further celebrations of events in Mary's life. We find on 9 December, exactly nine months before the feast of Mary's Nativity, her Conception by her mother Anna,⁴⁹ and on 21 November her Presentation (or Entry) into the temple at the age of three, where she then stayed in the holy of holies until her betrothal to Joseph.⁵⁰ Both of these feasts were derived from episodes in the *Protevangelion of James*, which had already provided the starting point for the feast of Mary's Nativity. Moreover, in the Typikon this last feast has acquired a 'Begleitfest' on the next day with the service of Mary's parents Joachim and Anna.⁵¹ These three celebrations are typically Constantinopolitan developments,⁵²

⁴⁶ Andrew of Crete, *In dormitionem I–III* (CPG 8181–3); PG 97, cols 1045–1109; *In natiuitatem I–IV* (CPG 8170–3), PG 97, cols 805–81. See C. Chevalier, 'Les trilogies homilétiques dans l'élaboration des fêtes mariales, 650–850', *Gregorianum* 18 (1931), 361–78. For translations and commentaries, see now M.B. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven. Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood NY, 2008) and B.E. Daley, S.J., *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood NY, 1998).

⁴⁷ A parallel development took place in Palestine, see John of Damascus, *In natiuitatem* (CPG 8060), ed. B. Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos, Opera homiletica et hagiographica*, Patristische Texte und Studien, 7, 12, 17, 22, 29 (5 vols, Berlin and New York, 1969–88), vol. 5, 147–82. Kotter accepts the Jerusalemite origin of the speech but considers it to be spurious, see *ibid.*, 149–50.

⁴⁸ A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts, I: Die Überlieferung*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, 50–2 (3 vols, Leipzig and Berlin, 1937–52), vol. 1, *passim*.

⁴⁹ Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 126.4–2. See Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance*, 26.

⁵⁰ Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 110.6–8. See R.F. Taft and A. Weyl Carr, 'Presentation of the Virgin', *ODB*, vol. 3, 1715, and Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance*, 28.

⁵¹ Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 22. See Baumstark, 'Begleitfeste', 78–92.

⁵² In earlier secondary literature it had been suggested that the feast of the Presentation developed out of the feast of the dedication of Justinian's New Church of the Virgin in Jerusalem on 20 November. However, this hypothesis must be rejected. In the Lectionary of the church of Jerusalem, which reflects the status quo of the eighth century, the entry of 20 November is a straightforward service for a dedication with no reference to an event in Mary's life; see Tarchnischvili, *Le Grand Lectionnaire*, no. 1373, 52. See H. Chirat, 'ΨΩΜΙΑ ΔΙΑΦΟΡΑ II. Les origines de la fête du 21 novembre', *Mélanges E. Podechard: études de sciences religieuses offertes pour son éméritat au doyen honoraire de la Faculté de théologie de Lyon* (Lyons, 1945), 127–33, esp. 132–3. Chirat also disproved an argument based on the homiletic evidence that had been proposed

and for hundreds of years were only found on Byzantine territory without spreading either to the West or to the East.⁵³ This suggests a date after 700 when the unity of the Mediterranean world had collapsed.⁵⁴ From liturgical and homiletic evidence it appears that all three feasts emerged in the course of the eighth century. The calendar edited by Morcelli, which by and large reflects the status quo of the early eighth century, lists neither Presentation nor Conception.⁵⁵ It does have the service in honour of Joachim and Anna but this was most likely a recent innovation.⁵⁶ The homiletic evidence suggests a somewhat different sequence. Here the Presentation appears as the earliest feast. The manuscripts attribute three sermons on this theme to patriarch Germanos, one of which appears to be genuine.⁵⁷ This sermon is found in

by S. Vailhé, 'Le fête de la présentation de Marie au temple', *EO* 5 (1902), 221–4, esp. 222–3. By contrast, Palestine had a feast of the Conception. However, this was without doubt an independent development since it was celebrated on 16 January. The independence of Palestine is also evident in the feast of the Visitation during the octave of Annunciation (Garitte, *Calendrier palestino-géorgien*, 57–8), for which there exists no Constantinopolitan counterpart; see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 262.2–3. Lastly, the service of Joachim and Anna is a *Begleitfest*, a companion piece to a more important feast, a typically Constantinopolitan phenomenon, which started in late antiquity with the creation of the *Synaxeis* of John the Baptist on 7 January, the day after Epiphany, and of Mary on 26 December, the day after Christmas: see Baumstark, 'Begleitfeste', 89.

⁵³ In the West, the feasts of the Presentation and the Conception were formally established only in the late Middle Ages; see R. Laurentin, *Court traité de théologie mariale* (4th edn, Paris, 1959), 48–50, esp. 56. The feasts of the Conception and of Joachim and Anna, but not the Presentation, appear on the marble calendar of Naples, which dates to the ninth century, see H. Delehay, 'Hagiographie napolitaine. Le calendrier de marbre', *AnalBoll* 57 (1939), 5–64, esp. 33, 42. However, this is an isolated case due to direct Byzantine influence. In Palestine, none of the three feasts is found in the Jerusalem Lectionary, which has on 9 September the commemoration of Phokas and Babylas, Tarchnischvili, *Lectionnaire*, no. 1227, 35–6; on 21 November the commemoration of the presbyter Passarion, Tarchnischvili, *Lectionnaire*, no. 1376, 52; and on 9 December the octave of Sabas, Tarchnischvili, *Lectionnaire*, no. 1404, 55. The first evidence for the reception of the three feasts is the tenth-century Georgian calendar of John Zosimos, which adds Constantinopolitan feasts to a stock of local celebrations; see Garitte, *Calendrier palestino-géorgien*, 89, 105, 109.

⁵⁴ A poignant reminder of this rupture are the two ceramic assemblages in the Crypta Balbi in Rome; see S.T. Loseby, 'The Mediterranean economy', in P. Fouracre, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History, c.500–c.700* (Cambridge, 2005), vol. 1, 605–38, esp. 634. The first assemblage, dating to c. 690, includes wares from Africa and the east whereas the second assemblage, dating to c. 720, is made up exclusively of central and southern Italian wares.

⁵⁵ As one would expect, it has Christ's Presentation, the Annunciation, Mary's Nativity and the Dormition, as well as the service of the Mother of God after Christmas; see Morcelli, ed., *Kalendarium*, vol. 1, 47, 49, 19, 66, 38.

⁵⁶ The *synaxarion* contains a comment, which distinguishes the feast from the commemoration of Anna's death; S in Delehay, *Synaxarium*, 29.8–14. That the editor felt the need to insert such a comment suggests that it was a relatively recent introduction.

⁵⁷ Germanos of Constantinople, *In praesentationem II* (CPG 8008), PG 98, cols 303–20; see S.G. Mercati, 'De nonnullis versibus dodecasyllabis s. Germani I Constantinopolitani Patriarchae homiliae εἰς τὰ εἰσόδια τῆς θεοτόκου', *Roma e l'Oriente* 9 (1915), 147–65, who

many manuscripts as the reading for the day and it is not unlikely that it is the first sermon that was ever written for the occasion.⁵⁸ By comparison, the first homily that was explicitly composed for the feast of the Conception dates to the mid-eighth century.⁵⁹ However, its author John of Euboea does not seem to have known the feast of the Presentation, which suggests that at that point the festal calendar was still in flux.⁶⁰ The hymnographical evidence for the Conception is ambiguous. Modern liturgical handbooks have a *kanon* by Andrew of Crete but this text may well be spurious.⁶¹ We are on safer ground with a second *kanon* by Kosmas Vestitor who belongs to the eighth or early ninth centuries.⁶² This Kosmas is also the author of the first sermon explicitly written for the feast of Joachim and Anna.⁶³

How does all this activity relate to the Chalkoprateia? The *Typikon* tells us that by the late ninth century, the Presentation and the feast of Joachim and Anna were celebrated in the Chalkoprateia,⁶⁴ and this was probably the case from the outset. It is likely that Germanos's sermon was destined for delivery in the Chalkoprateia since he also wrote the first extant sermon on the Deposition of the Girdle in which he extols the qualities of this relic.⁶⁵ No such link can be discerned for Kosmas but he was clearly a Constantinopolitan

identifies parallels with a prayer of Pseudo-Ephraem; however, this cannot be taken as evidence that the text is spurious. Comparison shows that Germanos's text is much more personal: see esp. 149 with juxtaposition of Germanos's *καὶ συναψὸν με τῇ ἐμῇ συγγόνῳ καὶ συνδούλῃ ἐν τῇ γῆ τῶν πραέων* and *συναψὸν με τοῖς σοῖς δούλοις καὶ λάτραις* in the prayer. By contrast, the homily *In praesentationem I* (CPG 8007), PG 98, cols 292–309, which is much less well represented in the manuscripts, contains vocabulary that is not found in Germanos's genuine homilies and is therefore most likely spurious. See Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 39, for a similar verdict. Undoubtedly spurious is the fragment of a third sermon that goes under Germanos's name, the fragmentary sermon *In praesentationem* (BHG 1076w; CPG 8015), E.M. Toniolo, ed., 'Sull' ingresso della Vergine nel santo dei santi. Una finale inedita di omelia bizantina', *Marianum* 36 (1974), 101–5.

⁵⁸ There can be little doubt that the speech, *ἰδοὺ καὶ πάλιν*, was the oldest speech on the Presentation. A survey of Ehrhard, *Überlieferung*, vols 1–3, reveals that it is found on its own in *Jahressammlungen* (full-year liturgical collections), *Halbjahressammlungen* (half-year collections) and together with George in the various types of the pre-Metaphrastic *Menologion*. The speech was still read in the Evergetis monastery, together with a sermon by George: see Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 321.

⁵⁹ Jugie, *L'Immaculée Conception*, 126–8, lists all known sources.

⁶⁰ John of Euboea, *In conceptionem* (CPG 8135), PG 96, cols 1460–1500, esp. 1473D–76A, where the author lists the feasts of the Conception, Nativity of Mary, Christmas, Presentation of Christ, Epiphany, Transfiguration, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and Dormition. Curiously, half of the sermon is devoted to Mary's entrance into the temple, which is the subject matter of the feast of Presentation: see PG 96, cols 1481A–97A.

⁶¹ Andrew wrote several texts on Patapios, who was commemorated on the same day on which the feast was celebrated (CPG 8217–19), PG 97, cols 1205–53. See A. Yannopoulos, 'Saint Patapios: entre l'histoire et la légende', *Erytheia* 24 (2003), 7–35.

⁶² Kosmas's *kanon* is edited in PG 106, cols 1013–18.

⁶³ Kosmas Vestitor, *In ioachim et Annam* (CPG 8151), PG 106, cols 1005–12.

⁶⁴ H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 110.8–11 and 23.1–3.

⁶⁵ Germanos of Constantinople, *In zonam* (CPG 8013), PG 98, cols 372–84.

and may therefore also have written his sermon on Joachim and Anna for the Chalkoprateia. The Conception presents us with a somewhat different case. Here the *Typikon* mentions a church in the quarter of Euouranoi near Hagia Sophia as the locale for the feast and only the later *synaxaria* refer to the Chalkoprateia instead.⁶⁶ If these two churches are not identical we would have to conclude that the Chalkoprateia only took charge of the feast of the Conception in the second half of the ninth century.⁶⁷ The homiletic evidence corroborates this view since it seems unlikely that the first sermon by John of Euboea was written for the Chalkoprateia: as I have mentioned before, he does not recognise the Presentation as a major feast.⁶⁸

Can we get a sense of the driving forces behind the development of the cult at the Chalkoprateia? Only in the case of the Presentation do we have sufficient evidence to attempt an answer. It seems probable that patriarch Germanos was responsible for the introduction of the feast and that it was he who chose the Chalkoprateia as the locale.⁶⁹ Since the next surviving sermon is by patriarch Tarasios, one can argue that the introduction of the Presentation was a project of the patriarchate in order to boost the status of its own Marian shrine in the Chalkoprateia.⁷⁰ In addition, it is possible that the Presentation was introduced in rivalry to the Blachernai because it is clearly a companion piece to the old feast of Christ's Presentation: both Mary and Christ are brought to the temple where they meet with a priest, Zachariah in the case of Mary and Symeon in the case of Christ.⁷¹ However, this does not mean that Germanos was exclusively

⁶⁶ H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 126.5–7: ἐν τοῖς Εὐουράνοις, not in P: see Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 29. In tenth-century *synaxaria* this has changed: see S in Delehay, *Synaxarium*, 291.12–14: ἐν τοῖς Χαλκοπρατείσις.

⁶⁷ For the church in the Euourania quarter, see Janin, *Églises et monastères*, 184–5, and more recently N. Asutay-Effenberger and A. Effenberger, 'Zur Kirche auf einem Kupferstich von Ğugas Inciciyan und zum Standort der Chalke-Kirche', *BZ* 97 (2004), 51–94, esp. 80–1.

⁶⁸ It has been argued that John was a provincial; see F. Dölger, 'Johannes "von Euboea"', *AnalBoll* 68 (1950), 5–26. However, the evidence does not permit a definite conclusion. It needs to be pointed out that he also wrote a speech on the Innocent Children (CPG 8136), PG 96, cols 1501–8, who were commemorated at the Chalkoprateia, see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 166.15–20.

⁶⁹ Kishpaugh, *The Feast of the Presentation*, 30–1, with reference to older secondary literature that speaks of Germanos's introduction of the feast in 730, reputedly mentioned in Balsamon's commentary on Photios' *Nomokanon*, which she could not verify. Patriarchal ratification is attested for the feast of the Deposition of the Robe; see Theodore Synkellos, *Inventio*, in Combefis, ed., *Novum Auctarium*, 782E–783A: κλειτήν τε αὐτήν ἑορτήν ὥρισε γίνεσθαι, and V. Grumel, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople* (Paris, 1936), vol. 1, 113, no. 280 (Sergios).

⁷⁰ Tarasios of Constantinople, *In praesentationem* (BHG 1149), PG 98, cols 1481–1500. The sermon was considered spurious by Morcelli, ed., *Kalendarium*, vol. 2, 250, but only because of the absence of the feast from the calendar, which he edited.

⁷¹ Authors of sermons on the Presentation make the parallel explicit, see e.g. Germanos, *In praesentationem II*, col. 312C–D, with juxtaposition of Zachariah and Symeon. See also J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance* (Paris, 1977), 58, who points out that George's kontakion on the Presentation, ed. J.B. Pitra, *Analecta Sacra Spicilegio Solesmensi parata* (8 vols, Paris, 1876–

a partisan of the Chalkoprateia church. It is true that he wrote a sermon on the Annunciation, another feast of the Chalkoprateia.⁷² However, like Andrew of Crete, he also composed a triad of sermons for the feast of the Dormition, which were most probably destined for delivery in the Blachernai.⁷³ The same pattern can be discerned for Kosmas Vestitor who also wrote a series of sermons on the Dormition.⁷⁴ This suggests that these authors were engaged in propagating the cult of Mary in Constantinople in general rather than focusing on the cults of a particular church.

Much of what has been said so far must remain hypothetical. The situation is somewhat better for the post-iconoclastic period where we can rely on the Typikon of the Great Church. The second half of the ninth century was a crucial period for the cult of saints in Constantinople: at that time a great number of hymns and sermons were composed. The main representative of this development was Joseph the Hymnographer, the sacristan of Hagia Sophia.⁷⁵ Joseph composed hymns on the Nativity of Mary and on the Presentation and also a kanon on the Deposition of the Girdle, which was undoubtedly destined for the Chalkoprateia.⁷⁶ However, he also wrote for the Blachernai and in general was such a prolific author that it is impossible to discern a closer link with a particular church.⁷⁷ We are on safer ground with Joseph's contemporary George of Nikomedeia, a close friend and associate of the patriarch Photios, who was active in the third quarter of the ninth century.⁷⁸ The scope of his literary production for the feasts of the Chalkoprateia is impressive. He composed a kanon for the feast of the Virgin's girdle,⁷⁹ and

91), vol. 1, 275–83, follows the disposition of Romanos's hymn on Christ's Presentation.

⁷² Germanos of Constantinople, *In annuntiationem* (CPG 8009), PG 98, cols 320–40.

⁷³ Germanos of Constantinople, *In dormitionem I–III* (CPG 8010–12), PG 98, cols 340–72.

⁷⁴ Kosmas Vestitor, *In dormitionem I–IV* (Latin) (CPG 815–18), ed. Wenger, *L'assomption de la très sainte Vierge*, 313–33.

⁷⁵ On Joseph, see most recently L. Van Rompay, 'Joseph l'Hymnographe (Saint)', *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques*, fasc. 162 (2001), 209–10.

⁷⁶ *Mariale*, 1–2, 6, PG 105, cols 984A–1000A, 1009D–1017D; a reference to the Chalkoprateia is found in ode 5.3, col. 1013A.

⁷⁷ See e.g. his kanons on the forefeast of the Dormition and on the Deposition of the Robe: *Mariale*, 4–5, PG 105, cols 1000A–1009C. A study of Joseph remains a desideratum, but see N.P. Ševčenko, 'Canon and calendar: the role of a ninth-century hymnographer in shaping the celebration of saints', in L. Brubaker, ed., *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive* (Aldershot, 1998), 101–14. The monograph by Tomadakes is largely descriptive; see E.I. Tomadakes, *Ἰωσήφ ὁ ὑμνογράφος. Βίος καὶ ἔργα* (Athens, 1971), and the review by D. Stiernon, 'La vie et l'œuvre de S. Joseph l'hymnographe. À propos d'une publication récente', *REB* 31 (1973), 243–66.

⁷⁸ For George of Nikomedeia see S. Varnalides, 'Georgios, Metropolit von Nikomedien', *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* 9 (1995), 484; A. Cutler and A. Kazhdan, 'George of Nikomedeia', *ODB*, vol. 2, 838; and J. Darrouzès, 'Georges de Nicomédie', *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 6 (1967), 242.

⁷⁹ The kanon was evidently composed for the Chalkoprateia, see *Μηναῖα τοῦ ὁλοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ: July–August* (Rome, 1889), vol. 6, 558 (ode 9): ναὸν ἐκμιμούμενον πᾶσαν τῶν οὐρανῶν τὴν εὐκοσμίαν σήμερον πιστοὶ τῆς παρθένου κατελιήφοτες.

several kanons for the forefeast of Mary's Nativity, which emphasise the status of this celebration as a major event of the liturgical year.⁸⁰ However, the bulk of his writings are devoted to the two new feasts of the Presentation and the Conception. He wrote three sermons on the Presentation, the first extant triad for the feast, which often appear in the manuscripts.⁸¹ In addition he also composed a kontakion, an idiomelon and a kanon and it has been suggested that he was responsible for an overhaul of the service.⁸² A similar pattern emerges when we turn to the feast of the Conception, which by then was definitely hosted by the Chalkoprateia. Here, too, we have a set of sermons by George, which became the standard reading for the day, and in addition a kanon, which is still found in modern liturgical handbooks.⁸³

George was a prolific author who wrote sermons on many topics, including a speech on Christ's Presentation, which may have been delivered in the Blachernai.⁸⁴ However, the sheer quantity of texts on feasts of the Chalkoprateia

⁸⁰ Four kanons for the forefeast are attributed to George; see A.D. Gonzato and G. Schirò, eds, *Analecta Hymnica Graeca e codicibus eruta Italiae Inferioris*, I, *Kanones Septembris* (Rome, 1966), 108–32, with commentary on 416–8, esp. 116, ode I.1–3: γεννήσεως σῆς προτρέχει χάρις προεόρτιος (compare Evergetis Typikon in Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 319: κανόνες γ' προεόρτιος ἡχος α' Γεωργίου).

⁸¹ George of Nikomedeia, *In praesentationem I–III* (BHG 1152, 1108, 1078), PG 100, cols 1401–56. For a list of manuscripts see Kishpaug, *Presentation*, 40, n. 64. Reading of sermons by George is stipulated for 21 November in the typikon of Patriarch Alexios; A.M. Pentkovskij, ed., *Typikon patriarha Aleksija Studita v Bizantii i na Rusi* (Moscow, 2001), 297: словеса георгия; and in the typikon of the Evergetis monastery; Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 321: λόγος τοῦ κυροῦ Γεωργίου εἰς δόσεις δύο οὐ ἡ ἀρχή· καλαὶ ἡμῖν ὑποθέσεις ζήτει εἰς τὸ πανηγυρικὸν τὸ μικρὸν τὸ πρῶτον, here together with speeches by Germanos and Proklos (*sic*). The typikon of the Patirion monastery does not give an author's name, see K. Douramani, ed., *Il typikon del monastero di S. Bartolomeo di Trigona*, (Rome, 2003), 84–5.

⁸² For the kontakion, see Pitra, *Analecta Sacra*, vol. 1, 275–83; for the idiomelon see PG 100, col. 1528B–C; see also *Μηναῖα τοῦ ὄλου ἐνιαυτοῦ: November–December* (Rome, 1889), vol. 2, 220–33, with kanons by George and by Basil; so already in the Evergetis Typikon: Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 321. Basil may be identical with Basil of Philippi, the author of an unedited sermon on the Presentation (BHG 1092e), about whom nothing else is known; see H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, XII.2.1 (Munich 1959), 546. For an alternative identification with Basil Pigariotes, metropolitan of Caesarea under Constantine VIII, see E. Bouvy, 'La fête de l'Éïσοδος ou de la présentation de la vierge au temple dans l'église grecque', *Bessarione* 1 (1896–97), 555–62, esp. 562, who is also the first to stress George's role in creating the service of the feast.

⁸³ George of Nikomedeia, *In Conceptionem I–IV* (BHG 1125z, 1102, 1111, 131), PG 100, cols 1346–1400. Various combinations of George's sermons are the reading for the day in the Evergetis Typikon in Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 334 (only Saturday and Sunday), and in the Patirion Typikon in Douramani, *Il typikon*, 94: 'λετζίονι δελα φεστα δι Γεοργιορε: οὐδὲν ἡδύτερον ἢ περιχαρέστερον'; the Typikon of Alexios does not mention a sermon; see Pentkovskij, *Typikon*, 302.

⁸⁴ The sermon on Christ's Presentation is unedited (BHG 1144k); George also wrote an unedited sermon *De Ioseph et Virgine* (BHG 1109g), which might have been destined for the service of the Mother of God in the Blachernai, but could easily also have been delivered in the Chalkoprateia on the Sunday after Christmas.

leaves no doubt that he had an especially close relationship with this church. George's objective was clear: through the composition and dissemination of three sermons for each feast he strove to bring them in line with the four established Marian feasts. What was the context for George's endeavours? The titles in the manuscripts inform us that he wrote his speeches when he was still *chartophylax* of the Great Church.⁸⁵ This suggests that he represented the interests of the patriarchal clergy who administered the Chalkoprateia and who were thus eager to promote the new cults. However, it is worth noting that George's friend, the patriarch Photios, did not write on the new feasts and indeed did not even acknowledge the existence of the feast of the Conception.⁸⁶ Thus it seems that in this case the concerns of the patriarchal clergy were not necessarily those of the patriarch himself.

Close ties both with the patriarchate and with the Chalkoprateia are also evident in the case of the Euthymios, patriarchal *synkellos* and later himself patriarch, who was active in the late ninth and early tenth centuries.⁸⁷ Euthymios's surviving treatments of Marian themes, three sermons on the Conception and one sermon on the Presentation, are all related to feasts of the Chalkoprateia, and he further wrote a speech in praise of Mary's girdle, which he delivered in this church.⁸⁸ Euthymios's focus on the Conception is of particular interest because this feast is ignored by other prolific writers of the time such as Niketas the Paphlagonian and Leo VI.⁸⁹ Since neither of these two authors is known to have had dealings with the Chalkoprateia one could argue that sermons on the Conception are a shibboleth for closer association with this church. The only apparent exception to this rule is Peter

⁸⁵ In the lemmata he appears either as metropolitan of Nikomedeia or as *chartophylax* of Hagia Sophia; see e.g. PG 100, col. 1401: Γεωργίου μοναχοῦ καὶ χαρτοφύλακος τῆς μεγάλης ἐκκλησίας.

⁸⁶ This assessment of the situation is confirmed by Photios's sermon on the Nativity of Mary in which the patriarch claimed that it was the oldest of all feasts, thus clearly disregarding the Conception for which George claimed such seniority. See Photios, *Homily IX* in B. Laourdas, ed., *Φωτίου ὁμιλίαι: ἔκδοσις κειμένου, εἰσαγωγή καὶ σχόλια*, Ellenika, Parartema, 12 (Thessalonike, 1959), 90.15–19; C. Mango, trans., *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 3 (Washington DC, 1958), 164–76.

⁸⁷ Euthymios was *synkellos* from 888/9 and became patriarch in 907. See P. Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii Patriarchae CP. Text, Translation, Introduction and Commentary*, *Bibliothèque de Byzantion* 3 (Brussels, 1970), 168.

⁸⁸ Euthymios, *In conceptionem I–III* (BHG 134c, 134b, 134a), ed. Jugie, *Homélies mariales byzantines*, vol. 1, 499–514; *idem*, *Homélies mariales byzantines*, vol. 2, PO 19 (Paris, 1926), 441–7, 448–55; *In praesentationem* (BHG 1112q), unedited in Ms. Chalki, Commercial School 31, 16th c. (see Ehrhard, *Überlieferung*, vol. 3, 580, n. 2). Euthymios, *In zonam* (BHG 1044e), ed. Jugie, *Homélies mariales byzantines*, vol. 1, 505–14.

⁸⁹ By comparison, both authors wrote sermons on the Nativity of Mary, see Niketas the Paphlagonian (BHG 1077), PG 105, cols 16–28, and Leo VI (BHG 1084), PG 107, cols 1–12. On 'Spezialpanegyriken' see Ehrhard, *Überlieferung*, vol. 2, 229–42. Niketas does not seem to recognise the Conception because he calls the Nativity of Mary the first Marian feast, see col. 17C–D. Leo VI also wrote on the Presentation (BHG 1156), PG 107, cols 12–21.

of Argos, who in the early tenth century wrote several sermons for feasts celebrated in the Chalkoprateia, among them a speech on the Conception and a eulogy of Mary's mother Anna.⁹⁰ Peter may well have delivered all his sermons in his diocese. However, this does not necessarily rule out an earlier connection with the Chalkoprateia: from his *Life* we learn that Peter had lived in Constantinople before he became bishop and that he had been closely connected with patriarch Nicholas Mystikos.⁹¹

We can conclude that between the early eighth and the early tenth century, authors with links to the patriarchate promoted three new feasts hosted by the Chalkoprateia. This sustained effort raises the question: was there an overarching theme or specific rationale behind these feasts? From the evidence we have discussed so far it is clear that there was a particular focus on the early part of Mary's life and on her parents in the main church, and on the apostle James in the chapel dedicated to him. This pattern is reinforced when we further take into account that the Typikon also mentions a commemoration of Mary, Joachim and Anna in the Chalkoprateia on Monday of the second week after Easter where it is complemented by a service for James on the following Saturday.⁹² The prominence of James can be explained through the presence of his relics at the Chalkoprateia. However, he is also the author of the *Protevangelion*, and he is the half-brother of Christ. This connection is emphasised in the liturgy for the Sunday after Christmas. As I have pointed out before, the Chalkoprateia had adopted from Palestine a commemoration of James and David, which it celebrated on this Sunday. However, in Constantinople this commemoration underwent a significant modification: the Typikon adds to these two figures the name of Joseph who in fact takes the first place.⁹³ This not only gives the feast a link to Christmas that it originally did not have, it also identifies James as Joseph's son and David as Joseph's ancestor.⁹⁴ Thus one can argue that

⁹⁰ Peter of Argos, *In conceptionem* (BHG 132), ed. K.T. Kyriakopoulos, *Ἁγίου Πέτρου ἐπισκόπου Ἀργους βίος καὶ λόγοι* (Athens, 1976), 23–34; *In praesentationem* (BHG 1111b), ed. Kyriakopoulos, 152–77, and *In Annam* (BHG 133), ed. Kyriakopoulos, 116–28. The manuscripts have the sermons on Anna as readings for the feast of Anna on 25 July but it is possible that they were instead destined for one of the two dates on which Anna was commemorated in the Chalkoprateia. For Peter we know of one further Marian sermon, devoted to the Annunciation (BHG 1159g), ed. Kyriakopoulos, 134–50.

⁹¹ Peter was a member of the monastery of St Phokas, see *Life* of Peter of Argos, 5–8, ed. Kyriakopoulos, 234.53–238.129. His brother Paul was the abbot of St Phokas. An abbot of St Phokas by that name held the function of *sakellarios* in the late ninth century, see Karlin-Hayter, ed., *Vita Euthymii Patriarchae CP*, 105.3–6, and more recently B. Flusin, 'Un fragment inédit de la Vie d'Euthyme le Patriarche. I. Texte et traduction, *Travaux et Mémoires* 9 (1985), 119–31, esp. 127.58–63.

⁹² Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 2, 110.14–15, 112.25–6. Unfortunately we have no further evidence for this feast.

⁹³ The anonymous sermon *In Jacobum fratrem dei* (CPG 8220) may have been destined for this feast. Its editors Noret and Gaspard argue for Palestinian provenance but a section about Joseph at the end of the speech in which the author emphasises Joseph's Davidic ancestry suggests a Constantinopolitan origin. See Noret and Gaspard, *A Eulogy of James the Brother of God*, 12, 72.7 – 74.25.

⁹⁴ The compiler of the Casole Typikon calls the commemoration a service of the

the clergy of the Chalkoprateia attempted to create a cult of the holy family, anticipating the later development in the West.⁹⁵

The great number of sermons and kanons destined for the Chalkoprateia raises the question: how successful were their authors in promoting the new feasts? The information contained in liturgical typika and in *synaxaria* affords us an insight into the later development. Here we only need to consider the two properly Marian feasts of the Presentation and the Conception since the commemoration of Joachim and Anna was always a minor event.⁹⁶ Comparison with the old Marian feasts reveals significant differences. Unlike Mary's Nativity, the Presentation of Christ, the Annunciation and the Dormition, the Presentation of Mary and the Conception were not celebrated in the space of a whole week.⁹⁷ Moreover, they did not have the same profile: there is no sign of official imperial attendance;⁹⁸ and there was also no elaborate public procession as in the case of Annunciation and Nativity of Mary: instead of making the detour to the forum the patriarch went straight to the Chalkoprateia.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the Presentation was a great success. Like Mary's Nativity and her Dormition, it has no rivals for the day in the Typikon of the Great Church.¹⁰⁰ Moreover,

relatives of Christ; see Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 814: τὴν ἀκολουθίαν τῶν συγγενῶν τοῦ κυρίου. One further figure should be mentioned in this context, Zacharias, the father of the Baptist, who was also identified with the priest who welcomed Mary into the temple. Here the Typikon of the Great Church does not give a locale for the cult. However, he may well have been commemorated in the Chalkoprateia since the church of St James possessed his relics, see above. Through his wife Elizabeth, Zacharias was related to the Virgin, a link that is stressed in the sermons that Kosmas Vestitor devoted to him; see Kosmas Vestitor, *In Zachariam* I–III (CPG 8152–4), ed. F. Halkin, 'Zacharie, père de Jean Baptiste: trois panégyriques par Cosmas Vestitor', *AnalBoll* 105 (1987), 252–6.

⁹⁵ T. Brandenburg, 'St Anna. A holy grandmother and her children', in A.B. Mulder-Bakker, ed., *Sanctity and Motherhood. Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages*, Garland Mediaeval Casebooks (New York and London, 1995), 31–65, esp. 56–8.

⁹⁶ In the Typikon of the Great Church, Joachim and Anna head a list that includes several other saints, in particular the three saints Menodora, Metrodora and Nymphodora and the martyr Severianos; see Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 22.17–21. Severianos was the subject of a kanon by Joseph the Hymnographer; D. Gonzato, ed., *Analecta Hymnica Graeca*, I, *Kanones Septembris* (Rome, 1966), 158–67. He is still represented in the *Menologion* of Symeon Metaphrastes; see *Passio* of Severianos (BHG 1627), PG 115, cols 640–52; see the pre-Metaphrastic *Passio* (BHG 1626). The monastic typika have only Joachim and Anna; see Patirion in Douramani, *Il typikon*, 42–3. See also Luzzi, 'Calendario eortologico', 241, and Pentkovskij, *Tipikon*, 280. Curiously the Evergetis Typikon makes no mention of Mary's parents; Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 266–7.

⁹⁷ See above, note 8.

⁹⁸ The two feasts are not mentioned in *De ceremoniis*.

⁹⁹ A procession is explicitly mentioned only for 21 November and even in this case only in one version of the *synaxarium*; see L in Delehaye, *Synaxarium*, 243.54–5. On processions in general, see J.F. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy*, OCA 228 (Rome, 1987), 212–13, 292–7.

¹⁰⁰ See Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 110.6–11 and Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 25.

it gradually acquired more and more of the prerogatives of a great feast: in the monastic typika of the eleventh and twelfth centuries it is preceded by a vigil,¹⁰¹ and it possesses a forefeast and one or two afterfeasts.¹⁰² The success of the Presentation is mirrored in the sermons, which contain no passages that would reveal uncertainty about the status of the feast. This is in sharp contrast with speeches on the Conception. As we have seen, the first text by John of Euboea is a plea to include the service among the great feasts. At the time of George of Nikomedeia this goal had evidently not yet been achieved, for he felt the need to dispel the notion that it was a recent innovation and stressed that it was one of the 'famous' feasts.¹⁰³ Despite George's efforts, the situation does not seem to have improved greatly since a few decades later Euthymios complained that 'the majority of Christians – I don't know why – overlook this feast as insignificant and do not cherish and celebrate it like one of the other feasts of the all-pure and God-bearing one'.¹⁰⁴ This situation was never to change: in later texts such as the Typikon of Nikon of the Black Mountain the Nativity of Mary and the Presentation are designated as great feasts whereas the Conception is only a 'medium' feast, of the same order as the commemorations of apostles and major saints.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, unlike the Presentation, the Conception did not acquire a vigil.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, George's efforts were not entirely in vain. Comparison between the different redactions of the Typikon of the Great Church reveals an interesting shift. In the oldest stratum the Conception shares the day with the commemoration

¹⁰¹ The Presentation has no *paramone* in the Typikon of the Great Church (see Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 108–9, and Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 25), which distinguishes it from old feasts such as the Nativity of Mary: see Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 19–20. A vigil is stipulated in the Evergetis Typikon, ed. Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 320: εἰς τὴν παννυχίδα τῆς ἀργυρνιακής (the same as for the Nativity of Mary; see Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 263), in the Mili Typikon, ed. Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 844, and in the Patirion Typikon, ed. Douramani, *Il typikon*, 84.

¹⁰² There is no reference to a *proeortion* or a *metheortos* in the Typikon of the Great Church; see Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 108.18–28, and 112.3–12. See also P in Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 25. The *typikon* of the Evergetis monastery, on the other hand, lists a forefeast and two afterfeasts; see Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 319, 323. However, this appears to have been exceptional. The *typikon* of Alexios the Studite and the Patirion *typikon* mention one afterfeast (see Pentkovskij, *Tipikon*, 296–8, and Douramani, *Il typikon*, 83–6), whereas the Casole and Messina *typika* contain no reference at all to an afterfeast: see Luzzi, 'Calendario eortologico', 245. The compiler of the Mili Typikon felt the need to stress that there was only one *metheortos*; see Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 844. Modern Menaea have four afterfeasts; *Μηναῖα τοῦ ὄλου ἐνιαυτοῦ: November–December*, vol. 2, 237–86. For the kanons by George, see above, note 82.

¹⁰³ George of Nikomedeia, *In Conceptionem I*, PG 100, col. 1353A: καὶ τὴν ἀγομένην ... σήμερον πανηγυρίζοντες ἑορτὴν οὐχ ὡς ὕστερον προσευρημένην ὡς δὲ τῶν εὐσήμων οὐσαν συναριθμοῦν.

¹⁰⁴ Euthymios of Constantinople, *In Conceptionem II*, ed. Jugie, *Homélies mariales byzantines*, vol. 2, PO 19, 441–2: οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως τὴν ὑπερκόσμιον τήνδε καὶ φαιδρὰν καὶ τιμίαν πανήγυριν οἱ πολλοὶ Χριστιανῶν ὡς μικρὰν παρορώσιν καὶ οὐχ ὡς μίαν τῶν λοιπῶν τῆς πανάγνου καὶ θεοτόκου πανηγύρεων κατέχουσι καὶ ἑορτάζουσι.

¹⁰⁵ V.N. Benešević, *Taktikon Nikona Černogorca* (St Petersburg, 1917), 61–3.

¹⁰⁶ See e.g. the Evergetis Typikon, ed. Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 333.

of the hermit Patapios, a Constantinopolitan saint of some standing whose life was the subject of speeches by Andrew of Crete and later also by Symeon Metaphrastes.¹⁰⁷ Later *synaxaria*, on the other hand, have Patapios as the main saint for the previous day, which suggests that his commemoration was moved to avoid a clash with the Conception.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, there are signs that Patapios found himself beleaguered even on his new day: the Casole Typikon defines 8 December first as the *proeortion* of the Conception and only then mentions the saint.¹⁰⁹ Here again the evidence points to involvement of George of Nicomedeia: contemporary liturgical handbooks contain a *kanon* for the forefeast that is attributed to him.¹¹⁰ By comparison, the feast never acquired a *metheortos*.¹¹¹ In order to understand why this is the case we need to have a closer look at the *sanctorale* of Constantinople. Originally, no important saints were commemorated on the days around 10 December: the manuscripts usually contain no texts for the days between the feast of Nicholas and the commemoration of Eustratios and his companions on 13 December.¹¹² This situation changed radically with the invention of the relics of Menas, Hermogenes and Eugraphos in the second half of the ninth century, which was staged by the entourage of Emperor Basil I.¹¹³ The inclusion of their *passio* is the major innovation in pre-Metaphrastic manuscripts of the *menologion*, preceding the first appearance of sermons on the Conception.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ In addition there is also a commemoration of the martyrs Sositheos, Narses and Isaac, which is, however, clearly of secondary importance, see Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 126.9–10, without biographical notice.

¹⁰⁸ Patapios appears on 9 December in H, P, B, Bb, C, Cb, Cc, Cd and on 8 December in in S, Sa, Sb, Da, Db, F, Fa, Ba, T, L, Q, Mb, Mv, Mr: see Delehay, *Synaxarium*, 290.56–293.26.

¹⁰⁹ Casole in Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 813: προεόρτια τῆς συλλήψεως τῆς ἁγίας Ἄννης καὶ τοῦ ὁσίου Παταπίου. This is also what we find in modern handbooks; see *Μηναῖα τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 2, 418–28. At the time, however, it was an isolated case: the *typika* of the Evergetis, Mili, Patirion and Messina monasteries have only Patapios on 8 December: see Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 333–6, 845; Douramani, *Il typikon*, 93–4; Luzzi, 'Calendario eortologico', 246.

¹¹⁰ *Μηναῖα τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 2, 419–27.

¹¹¹ See Evergetis, ed. Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 336; Mili, ed. Dmitrievskij, vol. 1, 845; for Patirion and Messina, see Luzzi, 'Calendario eortologico', 246.

¹¹² The manuscripts of *Jahressammlungen* of type A have above all a text on Nicholas for 6 December, immediately followed by a text on Eustratios for 13 December; Ehrhard, *Überlieferung*, vol. 1, 155–88. This situation is also reflected in liturgical calendars. The eighth-century calendar of Morcelli goes straight from Nicholas to Eustratios; see Morcelli, *Kalendarium*, vol. 1, 35–6, while the ninth-century calendar from the Skiti of St Andrew goes from Nicholas to Anastasia; see Ehrhard, *Überlieferung*, vol. 1, 29.

¹¹³ See H. Delehay, 'L'invention des reliques de saint Ménas à Constantinople', *AnalBoll* 29 (1910), 138–40.

¹¹⁴ The insertion can be seen in Jerusalem, Sab. 30, 10th–11th c., a *Jahressammlung* of the type B, where the *Passio* of Menas and his companions is inserted between texts on Nicholas and on Eustratios: see Ehrhard, *Überlieferung*, vol. 1, 197–203. While the manuscript contains no text on the Conception, it does have a reading for the Presentation. Menas and his companions are commemorated on 10 December in virtually all monastic *typika* of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, See Evergetis and

It is suggestive that the propagators of the new cult chose the day after the Conception for the feast of these saints. They clearly did not think that this choice might lower the chances for a success of the new cult. By contrast, the clergy of the Chalkoprateia was now in a difficult position because the Conception could only become a significant feast if it acquired at least one *metheortos*. Again it is George of Nikomedeia who took up the gauntlet: he wrote a kanon for 10 December in which he combined the theme of the Conception with the commemoration of the three martyrs,¹¹⁵ a pattern that is typical for the afterfeasts of great feasts.¹¹⁶ In the long run, however, George's bid proved unsuccessful: the liturgical typika of eleventh- and twelfth-century monasteries make no mention of an afterfeast.¹¹⁷ On the contrary, there is evidence that the commemoration of the three martyrs encroached on the Conception: the Evergetis *Synaxarion* stipulates that their *passio* be read on the day of the Marian feast whenever it falls on a weekday.¹¹⁸ This pattern is borne out by the homiletic evidence: from the eleventh to the fourteenth century we have numerous sermons on the Presentation by authors who were not linked to the Chalkoprateia,¹¹⁹ whereas there are no further speeches on the Conception apart from a text by James of Kokkinobaphos, which is merely a cento of one of George's sermons.¹²⁰

Mili in Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 336, 845; for Patirion and Messina, see Luzzi, 'Calendario eortologico', 246. Only the Stoudios monastery seems to have kept itself apart; see Pentkovskij, *Tipikon*, 302.

¹¹⁵ See A. Kominis and G. Schirò, eds, *Analecta Hymnica Graeca IV. Kanones Decembris* (Rome, 1976), vol. 4, 218–29, edited from a codex unicus. There is again a propagandistic element here; see ode 9.1, 229.251–6: ὄλα τὰ σὰ παρθένε ἐμεγάλυνεν ὁ Χριστὸς τὴν σύλληψιν τὸν τόκον τὸν σεπτὸν καὶ τὴν ἔνδον τοῦ ναοῦ μεθελικίωσιν ἐν ᾧ ὑπερτετίμησαι.

¹¹⁶ See Komines' commentary in *Analecta Hymnica Graeca*, vol. 4, 811–2. George composed a similar kanon for 17 August, the second day after the Dormition, which is devoted to this feast and to the martyrs Paul and Julian of Ptolemais; see A. Proïou and G. Schirò, eds, *Analecta Hymnica Graeca e codicibus eruta Italiae Inferioris XII. Kanones Augusti* (Rome, 1980), vol. 12, 172–80, and commentary on 471. Ode 6 further mentions the saints Strato, Tychikos and Philippos. In the entry for 17 August in H all these saints are listed, see Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 376.10–14. At the same time Joseph wrote a kanon that is exclusively devoted to the three martyrs. It is still part of the service today, which makes no reference to the Conception; see *Μηναία τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 2, 441–9.

¹¹⁷ Evergetis in Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 335; for Patirion and Messina, see Luzzi, 'Calendario eortologico', 246. Around the year 900 Anastasius Quaestor wrote a series of kanons about saints commemorated in December. For 10 December he has Menas and his companions, ed. Kominis, *Analecta Hymnica Graeca*, vol. 4, 230–40.

¹¹⁸ Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 334.

¹¹⁹ See, for example, the sermons by Michael Psellos (BHG 1107t) in E. Fisher, ed., *Michaelis Pselli orationes hagiographicae* (Leipzig, 1994), 257–66, and by Theophylact of Ochrid (BHG 1107), PG 126, cols 129–44.

¹²⁰ James of Kokkinobaphos, *In conceptionem* (BHG 1126), PG 127, cols 544–68. For the dependence on George, see most recently K. Linardou, 'Reading Byzantine illustrated books: the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts (Vaticanus graecus 1162 and Parisinus graecus 1208) and their illustration' (unpubl. PhD thesis, University of

The unceasing if not always successful activity at the Chalkoprateia contrasts strongly with the state of affairs in the Blachernai, where no new feasts were created to celebrate other events in Mary's life.¹²¹ Of course, this does not mean that the Blachernai went into a decline: it continued to be the locale for the three Marian feasts of the Service of the Mother of God, Christ's Presentation and, in particular, the enormously popular Dormition, which still inspired authors to write new sermons.¹²² We have seen that even George of Nikomedeia, whose focus was on the feasts of the Chalkoprateia, also wrote a speech for the Presentation of Christ. However, there are signs that the patriarchate attempted to alter this unfavourable situation. I have already mentioned that unlike the two later celebrations the four old Marian feasts have vigils in the Typikon.¹²³ In all these cases the Typikon informs us that the patriarch celebrated the vigils in the Chalkoprateia, even when the Blachernai provided the locale for the feasts on the next day.¹²⁴ The choice of the Chalkoprateia instead of Hagia Sophia for this purpose was without doubt a conscious decision to give prominence to the church in the complex of the Great Church that was dedicated to the Virgin.¹²⁵ Of course, this does not mean that the Blachernai did not host its own vigils before Christ's Presentation and the Dormition: indeed, we know that the emperors graced them with their presence.¹²⁶ At this point one could object that the absence of the patriarch from these celebrations was due to practical considerations: if he had gone to the Blachernai on the evening before he would have had to return to the Chalkoprateia during the night in order to lead the procession on the next morning.¹²⁷ However, comparable evidence suggests otherwise. For the evening before the feast of Peter and Paul on 29 June, the Typikon stipulates a public procession to the church of St Peter in the Orphanotropheion, which started from the chapel of St Peter adjacent to Hagia Sophia.¹²⁸ In this case the distance was not so great as to prevent a return

Birmingham, 2004), 10–11, 21, 25, 28–9.

¹²¹ This chapter only deals with Marian feasts. For other developments, see D. Afinogenov, 'Imperial repentance: the solemn procession in Constantinople on 11 March 843', *Eranos* 97 (1999), 1–10.

¹²² See e.g. Theodore of Stoudios (BHG 1157), PG 99, cols 720–9; the monk Theognost (BHG 1139k) in Jugie, ed., *Homélies mariales byzantines*, vol. 1, PO 16, 457–62, and Leo VI (BHG 1113), PG 107, cols 157–72.

¹²³ For a discussion of the term see Mateos, *Typikon*, vol. 2, 311.

¹²⁴ For the Presentation, see Mateos, *Typikon*, vol. 1, 222.1; for the Dormition, see Mateos, *Typikon*, vol. 1, 368.19; for the Annunciation, see Mateos, *Typikon*, vol. 1, 252.21, and for the Nativity of Mary, see Mateos, *Typikon*, vol. 1, 18.12

¹²⁵ On feasts of Christ, the *paramonai* were celebrated in the Great Church where there would then be the main service on the next day; see Mateos, *Typikon*, vols 1–2, *passim*, on Christmas, Epiphany, Transfiguration, Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday, Ascension as well as Pentecost and Exaltation of the Cross.

¹²⁶ For the Presentation, see Vogt, *De ceremoniis* I.39 (30), 150.1–6.24; for the Dormition see Vogt, *De ceremoniis* I.46 (37), 177.12–17.

¹²⁷ For the celebration of Mary's defence of the capital the patriarch did indeed go to the Blachernai for the vigil of a feast, see below.

¹²⁸ H in Mateos, *Typikon*, vol. 1, 322.23 – 324.21. See Janin, *Églises et monastères*, 399–400. See also the Commemoration of Peter and Paul on the Friday after Easter

in the same night. Nevertheless, the patriarch did not go all the way to the Orphanotropheion but soon returned to the chapel of St Peter where he then celebrated the *paramone*.¹²⁹

This parallel shows beyond doubt that the patriarch wished his own churches to be involved in as many occasions as possible. The result for the Chalkoprateia is clear: it became a secondary focus in the celebration of feasts that had the Blachernai as their locale and functioned as a rival for the evening service that was held at the Blachernai at the same time. In the case of Christ's Presentation this encroachment went even further. I have already mentioned that the Nativity of Mary acquired a companion in the celebration of Mary's parents Joachim and Anna on the next day. However, this was not the only Marian 'Begleitfest' that the Typikon lists for the Chalkoprateia: there is also the commemoration of the two prophets Symeon and Anna on 3 February, the day after the Presentation of Christ, which took place in the church of St James, no doubt because it possessed Symeon's relics.¹³⁰ As a consequence the feast in the Blachernai was ensconced by two celebrations in the Chalkoprateia.¹³¹ This suggests a concerted action by the patriarchal clergy to invade the territory of the Blachernai and thus arrive at a similar situation as in the case of John the Baptist where all the feasts were celebrated in the satellite church of St Theodore.¹³²

From the discussion so far it may seem that the Blachernai was completely inert and contented itself with its late antique acquisitions.¹³³ However, this

where the service is conducted in the Orphanotropheion but the patriarch remains at Hagia Sophia, see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 2, 104.18–23.

¹²⁹ H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 324.1–8.

¹³⁰ Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 226.1–3. Relics are mentioned in a kanon for the day, see E. Tomadakes and G. Schirò, eds, *Analecta Hymnica Graeca e codicibus eruta Italiae Inferioris VI, Kanones Februarii* (Rome, 1974), 76–87, esp. 86–7, 186–91. The introduction of the feast is difficult to date. It may already have been introduced in late antiquity when Symeon's relics were brought to the Chalkoprateia. An early date is also suggested by the fact that some manuscripts list as reading for the day a sermon by the seventh-century author Timothy of Jerusalem, *In Symeonem* (CPG 7405), PG 86, cols 237–52. A third *Begleitfest*, the commemoration of the archangel Gabriel on 26 March, the day after the Annunciation, first appears in the Evergetis *Synaxarium* of the mid-eleventh century: see Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 444. Owing to its character as a handbook for the ritual of a particular monastery, the Evergetis *Synaxarium* does not indicate the Constantinopolitan locale for the feast, but given that the other two *Begleitfeste* were celebrated in the Chalkoprateia it seems likely that it was also celebrated there.

¹³¹ Indeed, this may be the reason why the commemoration of Felicitas and Perpetua in the Blachernai took place on the day of the feast; see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 224.10–12. Interestingly, one manuscript has their *passio* as the reading for 3 February; see Ehrhard, *Überlieferung*, vol. 1, 571.

¹³² This chapter focuses on the Blachernai. However, this is not to say that the Chalkoprateia did not also compete with other churches. In the case of the *Begleitfest* of Joachim and Anna there may well have been some competition with St Anna in the Deuteron, which had been the focus of the cult of Mary's mother since late antiquity, since the Typikon of the Great Church mentions the dedication of a chapel of Mary in that church for 6 September; see Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 16.16–18.

¹³³ The only possible exception is the addition of Joseph to the Service of the

impression only arises because we have focused on feasts relating to events in the life of Mary. The innovations in the Blachernai lie in a different direction: it was the locale for several commemorations of miraculous rescues of the city, which can be dated to the seventh to ninth centuries, such as the lifting of the Avar siege in 626 on 7 August,¹³⁴ the rescue from the Saracens in 677 on 25 June,¹³⁵ the surviving of an earthquake in the year 740 on 26 October,¹³⁶ and again on 25 June the repulsion of the Rus' in the year 860.¹³⁷ In all these cases public processions took place, which usually first went to the forum.¹³⁸ Such commemorations were not a monopoly of the Blachernai: the great siege of 717 was commemorated in a church of Mary near the Golden Gate.¹³⁹ However, there can be no doubt that during the seventh and eighth centuries the Blachernai was the preferred choice for such celebrations. This is in stark contrast to the fifth and sixth centuries when they were more or less equally distributed over the various cult sites of the city.¹⁴⁰ The high status of the

Mother of God on 26 December, see S in Delehayé, *Synaxarium*, 344.23–4. In the Evergetis Typikon the name of Joseph has moved to the first position, before the Virgin, which completes the reinterpretation of this old feast: see Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 358–9. This could be seen as a counterpart to the commemoration of Joseph in the Chalkoprateia on the first Sunday after Christmas, which in several manuscripts of the *synaxarion* follows immediately afterwards, see Delehayé, *Synaxarium*, 343.39–46. Indeed, from the Evergetis Typikon it appears that elements of the service for the Sunday after Christmas were employed in the service on 26 December; see στιχηρὰ τῶν δικαίων, which also appears on the Sunday after Christmas, where it makes more sense since Joseph is commemorated together with other 'righteous' men.

¹³⁴ H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 362.14–18: commemoration of help against enemies surrounding the city: procession from Hagia Sophia to Blachernai. The calendar of Morcelli specifically mentions the Avars, see Morcelli, *Kalendarium*, vol. 1, 65: μνήμη τῶν Ἀβάρων ἐν Βλαχέρναις. This is confirmed by the later *synaxaria*, which date this event to the reign of Herakleios.

¹³⁵ H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 320.1–6: commemoration of help against Saracens through intercession of Mary.

¹³⁶ H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 78.16–20: commemoration of earthquake under Leo the Isaurian; see also first Monday of Pentecost, see Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 140.10–12, with commemoration of an earthquake in the Blachernai.

¹³⁷ P in Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 83: commemoration of the help against Saracens and Rus. A chronicle gives 18 June as the date; see Mango, *Homilies*, 76.

¹³⁸ Exceptions are the commemoration of the Avar siege and the attack by the Rus'.

¹³⁹ The *Typikon* lists for 16 August the commemorations of the siege of 718 and of the earthquake of 542. The procession to the church of Theotokos 'Jerusalem' mentioned afterwards probably refers to the siege but possibly also to the earthquake; see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 373.7–15.

¹⁴⁰ In a number of cases the commemoration of a disaster in a church is combined with the commemoration of its patron saint. This leaves little doubt that the liturgical calendar determined the choice of the locale for services of thanksgiving. Examples are the commemorations of earthquakes on 7 October in Sts Sergios and Bakkhos (dated to 525?), see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 62.8–23; on 14 December in St Thyrsos in Helenianae (dated to 567), see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 90.22–8; on 9 January in St Polyuktos (of uncertain date), see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 192.1–5; and possibly also the commemoration of the hail of cinders on 6 November in St Peter and Paul in the Triconch (dated to 472). Otherwise the churches of John the Evangelist and John the

Blachernai in the later period is manifest in the thanksgiving for all rescues on the Saturday after the week of mid-Lent. This feast was preceded by a vigil in the Blachernai, which in this case was attended by both emperor and patriarch.¹⁴¹

The new role of the Blachernai was closely related to Mary's robe, which was kept there. The robe had already been recognised as wonder-working in the sixth century, but in the seventh century it took on the function of a palladium of the city.¹⁴² The first indicator of this development is the sermon of Theodore the Synkellos, which has already been mentioned.¹⁴³ We then find references to displays of the robe during the siege of Thomas in 822,¹⁴⁴ during the attack of the Rus' in 860¹⁴⁵ and during the Bulgar siege of 924.¹⁴⁶ By comparison the girdle of the Chalkoprateia is never mentioned on these occasions and clearly played no major role in public imagination. However, this is not the impression one gets from the contemporary texts in praise of the girdle that have been mentioned in the first part of this chapter. Already Germanos avers in his sermon that the girdle surrounds Constantinople and fends off all barbarian attacks, and this theme is then taken up in the ninth century in the hymns of Joseph the Hymnographer and George of Nicomedeia.¹⁴⁷ At the same time an attempt was made to create a closer link

Baptist in the Hebdomon appear to have been favourite destinations, on 25 September for the commemoration of an earthquake (early sixth century), see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 44.24 – 46.6, and on 5 June the commemoration of an Avar siege (617?), see H, *ibid.*, 306.2–4. In other cases the reason for the choice of a church is unclear, see e.g. the commemoration of the earthquake of 450 on 26 January in Theotokos in Helenianae, H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 212.1–14. Hagia Sophia was only rarely chosen as locale for such a celebration, e.g. for the commemoration of the earthquake of 790 on 17 March, see H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 1, 248.25 – 250.3. It is worth noting that no such celebration took place in the Pēgē church.

¹⁴¹ H in Mateos, *Typicon*, vol. 2, 53.20–6.

¹⁴² On the robe see N.H. Baynes, 'The supernatural defenders of Constantinople', *AnalBoll* 67 (1949), 165–77.

¹⁴³ See Cameron, 'The Virgin's robe', 42–8. Significantly there was never another sermon written for the feast, which contrasts starkly with the succession of sermons about the girdle from the seventh to the tenth century.

¹⁴⁴ J. Thurn, ed., *Ioannis Scylitzae synopsis historiarum*, Michael Traulos 9, CSHB 5 (Berlin and New York, 1973), 34.78–85. However, see H.A. Klein, *Byzanz, der Westen, und das 'wahre' Kreuz. Die Geschichte einer Reliquie und ihrer künstlerischen Fassung in Byzanz und im Abendland* (Wiesbaden, 2004), 50, who considers the reference to the robe a post-iconoclastic addition and argues that in 822 only the True Cross was carried around the walls.

¹⁴⁵ Photios, *Homilia III*, ed. Laourdas, *Φωτίου ὁμιλία*, 45.10–34.

¹⁴⁶ Thurn, ed., *Ioannis Scylitzae synopsis*, Romanos Lekapenos 12, 219.31–5. Emperor John Tsimiskes even wrapped the relic around himself when he set out to conquer Preslav; see e.g. R. Ousterhout, 'The Virgin of the Chora: an image and its contents', in R. Ousterhout and L. Brubaker, eds, *The Sacred Image East and West*, Illinois Byzantine Studies 4 (Urbana and Chicago IL, 1995), 91–109, esp. 94–6.

¹⁴⁷ Germanos, *In Zonam*, PG 98, col. 377B: ὡ ζώνη σεπτῆ ἢ τὴν σὴν πόλιν περικυκλοῦσα καὶ περιέπουσα καὶ βαρβαρικῆς ἐπιδρομῆς ἀνεπιβούλευτον διασώζουσα. See the kanons by George of Nikomedeia, ode 1.2, *Μηναῖα τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ: July–August*, vol. 6, 355, and

between the girdle and the robe. This is evident in the *Typikon* of the Great Church, which stipulates for both feasts the same service with praises of both robe and girdle as ramparts of the city.¹⁴⁸ This tendency is most obvious in a sermon from the ninth or tenth century that the manuscripts variously attribute to Germanos, Michael the Synkellos and Theophanes of Nicaea.¹⁴⁹ The author, who presents himself as a seasoned encomiast of Mary, creates such a close link between the girdle and the robe that one gets the impression they were venerated together.¹⁵⁰ This has caused great confusion in academic discussion, in particular since from the ninth century onwards the robe tends to be referred to as a veil.¹⁵¹ The thrust of these strategies is evident: through

Joseph the Hymnographer, ode 5.3, see *Mariale*, no. 5, PG 105, col. 1016B. Significantly, Joseph also wrote a *kanon* on the robe where the reference is found in the first ode; see *Mariale*, no. 4, PG 105, col. 1004D. The theme is absent from Euthymios's sermon on the girdle.

¹⁴⁸ See H in Mateos, *Typikon*, vol. 1, 328.19–22: θεοτόκε ἀειπαρθένε τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἡ σκέπη ἐσθῆτα καὶ ζώνην τοῦ ἀχράντου σου σώματος κραταῖαν τῇ πόλει σου περιβολὴν ἐδώρῃσω. This *troparion* is also prescribed in P, Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 86, where it is further specified that the same service is used for the deposition of the girdle; Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 110: ἡ ἀκολουθία πᾶσα ἐγράφη εἰς τὰς β' τοῦ Ἰουλίου.

¹⁴⁹ *De zona* (CPG 8026), ed. F. Combefis, *Novum auctarium* (2 vols, Paris, 1648), vol. 2, 790–802 (e codice mutilo). Jugie, *La mort et l'assomption*, 702, n. 1, attributes the text to yet another author, George of Nikomedeia, who is, however, never mentioned in the manuscripts.

¹⁵⁰ See esp. 794D, where the author states that he has already delivered speeches at the feasts of Mary's Nativity, Presentation, Annunciation, Nativity of Christ and the Dormition. If Michael was indeed the name of the author, he may have written a sermon on the Presentation; see the manuscript index of a lost manuscript in Vat. Reg. lat. 2099, which has for 21 November: *Michael monachus de purificatione Virginis*. Ehrhard identifies him with the author of the Life of Theodore; see Ehrhard, *Überlieferung*, vol. 1, 484–8. In any case the speech can be dated between the end of iconoclasm (see the reference to icon theology in 791B) and the eleventh century, the date of the oldest manuscripts, see R.J. Loenertz, 'Le panégyrique de S. Denys l'Aréopagite par Michel le Syncelle', *AnalBoll* 68 (1950), 103–4. For the close association of the girdle with the robe, see e.g. 790B–C: αὐτὸ (sc. τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα) καὶ τὸν ἡμέτερον λόγον πάλαι κεκμηκότα τῷ πλήθει τῶν πειρασμῶν τοσαύτης ἐνέπλησε τῆς προθυμίας ὥστε μὴ τῆς ζώνης μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς τιμίας ἐσθῆτος τῶν ἐπαίνων συνεφάσασθαι· καὶ γὰρ ἄλλως οὐδ' ὄσιον ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ταῦτα τῇ μνήμῃ διελεῖν ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἀμφοῖν ἅμα χρῆσθαι πρὸς τὴν ἐν σαρκὶ ζῶν ἡ πανάμωμος πιστεύεται οὕτω δέον καὶ ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἴδια κοινῇ δὲ τὸν πρέποντα τούτοις αἶνον ἐξυφάνασθαι. The Chalkoprateia as the locale for the delivery is indicated in 798D through reference to Christ's swaddling clothes, which were without doubt kept in the Chalkoprateia.

¹⁵¹ Confronted with the complex evidence, Jugie came to the conclusion that until the third quarter of the ninth century Mary's girdle was kept in the Blachernai and that it was only then transferred to the Chalkoprateia; see Jugie, *La mort et l'assomption*, 687–707, esp. 702. For the shift from robe to veil, see *ibid.*, 690–6. This is manifestly untrue since the sermons of Theodore Synkellos and patriarch Germanos clearly show that the two relics were in their respective churches as early as the seventh century. Jugie can only make his case because he discounts earlier evidence; see *ibid.*, 702, where he argues that Germanos delivered his speech on the girdle in the Blachernai and that Theodore Synkellos wrote in the ninth century, and where he further supposes that the calendar of Morcelli, which already distinguishes between two caskets, must be late. Despite the circularity of Jugie's argument his interpretation has become the communis

close association with the more famous relic of the robe the authors hoped to give the girdle a similar status. Although this hope was never granted, one cannot be but impressed by the tenacity with which the clergy in charge of the Chalkoprateia pursued its objective. Comparison with the Blachernai only serves to underline this fact. Whereas the girdle was praised in at least three sermons that can be dated to the eighth to tenth centuries, the manuscripts invariably have only the early sermon by Theodore Synkellos as reading for the Deposition of the Robe. Moreover, parts of the service for this last feast are clearly derivative: in modern liturgical books we find a kanon that is a clumsy adaptation of George of Nikomedeia's kanon in honour of the girdle.¹⁵² This discrepancy leaves no doubt that the way in which the Chalkoprateia propagated its Marian feasts through effective use of homilies and hymns was unparalleled in the Blachernai and most likely also in other churches of the capital.

In this chapter I have shown how, after a slow start in late antiquity, the cult of Mary in the Chalkoprateia took off in the Middle Byzantine period when the traditional feast of the Nativity of Mary rose in importance and when the two new feasts of her Presentation and her Conception emerged. This activity started in the early eighth century and culminated in the tenth, by which time the Presentation had been universally accepted as a great feast whereas the Conception had not achieved the same success. At the same time a claim was made that Mary's girdle had the same apotropaic function as the robe in the Blachernai. These developments reflect a concerted effort by the patriarchal clergy to promote its church in the Chalkoprateia as the major Marian cult site in Constantinople and to challenge the traditional supremacy of its rival in the Blachernai.

opinio. Several authors follow him in positing a ninth-century translation of the girdle from the Blachernai to the Chalkoprateia. See C. Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church*, Birmingham Byzantine Series 1 (London, 1982), 152; J. Wortley, 'The Marian relics of Constantinople', *GRBS* 45 (2005), 171–87, esp. 179–83, and A. Weyl Carr, 'Threads of authority: the Virgin Mary's veil in the Middle Ages', in S. Gordon, ed., *Robes and Honor. The Medieval World of Investiture* (New York and Basingstoke, 2001), 59–93, esp. 63. None of these authors seems to be aware of the earlier studies by Barnes and Cameron.

¹⁵² This is evident from the juxtaposition of the lines τὸν ναόν τε σὺν ζώνῃ καὶ θείᾳ σορῶ in the kanon for 31 August, *Μηνναία τοῦ ἔτους ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 6, 355 and σὺν τῇ ζώνῃ ἐσθῆτι καὶ θείᾳ σορῶ in the kanon for July 2, *Μηνναία τοῦ ἔτους ἐνιαυτοῦ*, vol. 6, 18, where the second variant is clearly a clumsy adaptation of the previous one. Jugie concluded from this that there was only one casket during the lifetime of George; see Jugie, *La mort et l'assomption*, 700.

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The Service of the Virgin's Lament Revisited

Nancy P. Ševčenko

The subject of this chapter is a service that at one time, that is, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, took place late in the day on Good Friday. This service, which is no longer performed, was once an integral part of Good Friday monastic *apodeipnon* (compline).¹

Central to this Good Friday compline service was the singing of a hymn referred to in Byzantine sources as a *kanon threnodes*, or a *kanon threnetikos*, a *kanon eis ton epitaphion threnon*, or a *kanon eis ton threnon tes hyperagias Theotokou*. It is a *kanon*, much of which is in the words of the Virgin herself, as she mourns her son hanging upon the cross and then stretched out before her in death. Only two examples of this type of *kanon* are known today. One of them was edited anonymously in 1913 on the basis of four manuscripts;² this *kanon* is generally ascribed to the tenth-century author Symeon Metaphrastes, and seems to have been fairly widely disseminated.³ The other surviving 'lament' *kanon* is virtually unknown. It is by a Nicholas, patriarch of Constantinople, presumably Nicholas I Mystikos who was patriarch of Constantinople in the first quarter of the tenth century (d. 925). It was edited by Pitra in his corpus of Byzantine hymns, on the basis of a lone manuscript of the fourteenth century in

¹ For a brief notice about this service, see S. Janeras, *Le Vendredi-Saint dans la tradition liturgique byzantine. Structure et histoire de ses offices*, *Analecta Liturgica* 12 (Rome, 1988), 427–8. See also the works cited in note 17 below.

² 'Un' ufficiatura perduta del Venerdì Santo', *Roma e l'Oriente* 5 (1913), 302–13. The *kanon* is in the second plagal mode (mode 6); the *heirmos* of its first ode is Κύματα θαλάσσης, its incipit: Θέλων σου τὸ πλάσμα.

³ No list of manuscripts has been drawn up. The *kanon* is attributed to Andrew of Crete in the 13th–c. *Menaion-Synaxarion/Psalter/Triodion*, and so on, Mount Athos Lavra Δ 45, fol. 309r; D. Pallas, *Die Passion und Bestattung Christi in Byzanz. Der Ritus-das Bild* (Munich, 1965), 33; A. Luzzi, 'Un canone inedito di Giuseppe innografo ...', *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici* 30 (1993), 33; to Germanos in a 16th–c. *Miscellany*, Benaki TA 44, fol. 70r; E. Lappa-Zizika, *Catalogue des manuscrits grecs du Musée Benaki (10e – 16e s.)* (Athens, 1991) (in Greek), 92, no. 48; to Theophanes in the 12th–c. *Horologion/Menaion*, Vat. gr. 1072, fol. 6v (in the margin); see also 'Un'ufficiatura perduta del Venerdì Santo', 305–6.

Paris; Westerink included it among the dubious works of Nicholas Mystikos.⁴ Westerink's edition is once again based on the single Paris manuscript, and as far as I know, no other example of this text has come to light. Neither kanon appears in any Greek printed liturgical book.⁵ Furthermore, the first kanon, the one attributed to Metaphrastes, is transmitted not so much in manuscripts of the *Triodion*, where we would expect to find it, as in kanon collections or late miscellanies often assembled for private use. The text itself is by no means stable, but varies widely from manuscript to manuscript.⁶ Our earliest surviving manuscript of either kanon appears to be Vat. gr. 1072, a *Horologion/Menaion* of the twelfth century.⁷

The theme of the two kanons, the lament of the Virgin, has a venerable literary history. Although the Gospels make scant reference to the Virgin's presence at the Crucifixion, Deposition or Burial (only John 19:25–27 is explicit about her presence at the Crucifixion), writers from the sixth century onward began to put words into her mouth that they imagined the Virgin would have said when beholding her son upon the cross or awaiting burial. The dossier of works relating to the Virgin's lament reaches from the hymns of the poets Ephrem and Romanos the Melode, of the fourth and sixth centuries respectively, through Maximos the Confessor in the seventh, to the moving and dramatic prose homilies on the theme of the lamenting Virgin by ninth- and tenth-century authors such as George of Nicomedeia, whose work became standard reading on Good Friday.⁸ They culminate in the fourteenth

⁴ J.B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra spicilegio Solesmensi parata* (8 vols, Paris, 1876–91, repr. Farnborough, 1967), vol. 4, 492–5. L.G. Westerink, *Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople. Miscellaneous Writings* (Washington DC, 1981), ix–xi, 88–100 (no. 203). The manuscript in question is Paris, B.N. gr. 400, fols 12r–15v. It is an alphabetic kanon with the name Nikolaou spelled out in the Theotokia. It is in the second plagal mode (6th mode) (although Pitra says 1st mode; Westerink's Greek says 2nd plagal, while his English translation says 1st plagal!); the heirmos for the first ode is Ὡς ἐν ἐπέρω, its incipit: Ἀναρτηθέντα ὡς εἶδεν ἐπὶ σταυροῦ.

⁵ Curiously enough, the kanon attributed to Nicholas Mystikos does appear in Slavic printed liturgical books, and has been translated from the Slavic in Mother Mary and K. Ware, *The Lenten Triodion* (London, 1978), 617–21. It may therefore have had a wider distribution than the manuscript tradition would indicate. Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware mistakenly give Symeon the Logothete (Metaphrastes) as its author, when in fact Symeon is the presumed author of the *other* kanon, not the one they translate, which is attributed to Nicholas in both the title and the Theotokia. See also R. Taft, 'In the Bridegroom's absence. The Paschal Triduum in the Byzantine Church', in *idem, Liturgy in Byzantium and Beyond* (Aldershot, 1995), no. V, 71–97, esp. 77; *Triodion und Pentekostarion: nach slavischen Handschriften des 11. – 14. Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn, 2004), 161, 189–202.

⁶ Some of the manuscripts are listed in note 3 above. To be added: Vat. gr. 731, a Miscellany of the 13th or 14th century (fols 177av–182r); Vat. gr. 1517, a 15th–c. collection of Holy Week services (fols 64r–67v); Venice, Bibl. Marciana II 126, a Miscellany of the 15th c. (fols 110v–116r). See also S. Eustratiades, 'Symeon logothetes ho Metaphrastes', *EEBS* 8 (1931), 63, no. 11.

⁷ See note 3 above.

⁸ Ephrem: W. Bakker and D. Philippides, 'The Lament of the Virgin by Ephraem the Syrian', in S. Kaklamanes et al., eds, *Enthymesis Nikolaou M. Panagiotake* (Herakleion,

century in the so-called *epitaphios threnos* of Holy Saturday *orthros*, the lengthy burial lament that takes the form of a sequence of verses called *enkomia* or *megalynaria* inserted, line-by-line, between the verses of the funerary Psalm 118, known as the *Amomos*.⁹ By this time, the fourteenth century, a mimetic burial procession had apparently already developed to accompany these verses: an embroidered textile representing the dead Christ laid out for burial was carried around the church after the verses were sung, mourned in its passing by the assembled congregation.¹⁰ The post-Byzantine period saw the rise of the laments known as the *mirologia*, the emotional laments led by village mourners directed to the embroidered body of Christ in and out of the church, devoid of precise liturgical context.¹¹

2000), 49–56; W.F. Bakker, “‘Ephraem the Syrian’s’ Ἐρηῶς τῆς Θεοτόκου: What? When? Where? Why?”, *BMGS* 29 (2005), 17–38. Romanos: J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode, Hymnes* (5 vols, Paris, 1964–81), vol. 4, 143–87 (no. 35: Hymne de Marie à la Croix); Maximos the Confessor: see S. Shoemaker in this volume; George of Nikomedeia: PG 100, 1457–1504, *BHG* 1139, 1156; Janeras, *Le Vendredi-Saint dans la tradition liturgique byzantine*, 431–3 (for the services at which the texts were read); H. Maguire, ‘The depiction of sorrow in Middle Byzantine art’, *DOP* 31 (1977), 123–74, esp. 162; *idem*, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton NJ, 1981), 96–101; *idem*, ‘Two modes of narration in Byzantine art’, in C. Moss and K. Kiefer, eds, *Byzantine East, Latin West. Art-historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann* (Princeton NJ, 1995), 385–91. See also M. Vassilaki and N. Tsironis, ‘Representations of the Virgin and their association with the Passion of Christ’, in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens and Milan, 2000), 453–63, esp. 457–61.

⁹ S. Eustratiades, ‘He akolouthia tou Megalou Sabbatou kai ta megalynaria tou Epitaphiou’, *Nea Sion* 32 (1937), 16–23, 145–52, 209–26, 273–88, 337–53, 465–80, 529–45, 593–608, 657–73; 33 (1938), 19–28, 370–77, 433–52. E. Pantelakes, ‘Nea encomia tou Epitaphiou’, *Theologia* 14 (1936), 225–50; Th. Detorakis, ‘Anekdotia megalynaria tou Megalou Sabbatou’, *EEBS* 47 (1987–9), 221–46. See also D.H. Touliatos-Banker, *The Byzantine Amomos Chant of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Thessalonike, 1984), esp. 200–11. The *Amomos* itself is a standard part of every Saturday *orthros*.

¹⁰ On the ceremony, see Taft, ‘In the Bridegroom’s absence’, esp. 76–91; Janeras, *Le Vendredi-Saint dans la tradition liturgique byzantine*, 393–402; Pallas, *Die Passion und Bestattung Christi in Byzanz*, 38–51. On the textile, see G. Millet, ‘L’Epitaphios: l’image’, *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres* (Paris, 1942), 408–19; S. Ćurčić, ‘Late Byzantine *loca sancta*? Some questions regarding the form and function of Epitaphioi’, in S. Ćurčić and D. Mouriki, eds, *The Twilight of Byzantium* (Princeton NJ, 1991), 251–61; W. Woodfin, ‘Liturgical textiles’, in H. C. Evans, ed., *Byzantium. Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (New York, New Haven CT and London, 2004), 295–8, esp. 296–7, and 312–18.

¹¹ On the full range of these works, see M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge, 1974, 2nd edn, 2002), esp. 62–78, and her ‘The Lament of the Virgin in Byzantine literature and modern Greek folk-song’, *BMGS* 1 (1975), 111–40. See also B. Bouvier, *Le mirologue de la Vierge. Chansons de poèmes grecs sur la Passion du Christ, I. La chanson populaire du Vendredi Saint*, *Biblioteca Helvetica Romana* 16 (Geneva and Rome, 1976). For other literary works on this theme, see M. Manousakas, ‘Hellenika poiemata gia te staurosi tou Christou’, in *Mélanges offerts à Octave et Melpo Merlier* (3 vols, Athens, 1956–57), vol. 2, 1–26 (= 49–74); W. Bakker, *Threnos tes hyperagias Theotokou legomenos te Hagia kai Megale Paraskeue* (Athens, 2005); W. Bakker and A.F. van Gemert, eds, *Threnos eis ta pathe kai ten staurosin tou Kyriou kai Theou kai Soterou hemon Iesou Christou* (Herakleion, 2002) (and the review article by C. Carpinato, *BZ* 98

As works of literature, our two kanons are derivative, and do not contribute anything especially new to this long tradition.¹² The Passion events are recounted from the point of view of the Virgin, who addresses Christ on the cross, and as a corpse lying before her. She speaks of her fears for her future once he is dead, and of her fall from grace. In the place of swaddling clothes, she cries, here before her is the shroud; instead of the manger, the grave; instead of a mother's milk, a mother's tears. The Virgin speaks movingly of the dying of the light, and of Christ's loss of physical beauty. In one of the kanons, the one attributed to Nicholas Mystikos, she goes so far as to accuse Christ of abandoning her, and receives in response his patient explanation for why he had to take the path he did that causes her such suffering.¹³

The first kanon, the one attributed to Metaphrastes, was very plausibly connected by its editor to the unspecified *kanon threnodes* mentioned in the liturgical *Typikon* of the eleventh-century monastery of the Virgin Evergetis in Constantinople.¹⁴ According to this *Typikon* text, the monks, right after the meal that followed Vespers on Good Friday:

... getting up [from the table] and giving thanks, as is customary ... we immediately chant *apodeipnon* (compline), [recite] the Μεθ' ἡμῶν (Is 8:8, ff.) in simple style, and Ὁ εὐσχήμων Ἰωσήφ (a troparion about Joseph of Arimathea), and [from] the *kanon threnodes* of the Theotokos in the second plagal mode, [having the] *heirmos* Κύματι θαλάσσης, six troparia slowly and with attention. We chant both *apodeipnon* and the kanon inside the church. And we recite its *heirmoi*. After the third ode, nothing; after the sixth ode, the *πρεσβεία* θερμῆ (a troparion addressed to the Virgin), and the rest as usual, and the dismissal.¹⁵

[2005], 403–21]; W. Bakker, 'The θρῆνος τῆς Θεοτόκου (ed. Manousakas 1956) and the *Threnos, seu Lamentatio sanctissimae Dei genetricis* by Ephraem the Syrian', in E. and M. Jeffreys, eds, *Anadromika kai Prodomika. Neograeca Medii Aevi V* (Oxford, 2005), 375–93; F. Tinnefeld, 'Georgios Lapithes. Eine Ethopoiie auf Maria unter dem Kreuz Christi', *Orthodoxes Forum* 1 (1987), 33–53.

¹² Their content derives primarily from the earlier prose homilies of George of Nikomedeia and of Symeon Metaphrastes, although the kanon attributed to Metaphrastes does have a somewhat rare motif, that of the Virgin addressing Gabriel: Bakker, 'Ephraem the Syrian's' θρῆνος τῆς Θεοτόκου', 23–4. See the works cited in note 8 above, and N. Tsironis, 'From poetry to liturgy: the cult of the Virgin in the Middle Byzantine era', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), 91–9.

¹³ The last ode seems almost tacked on: it bears a close thematic resemblance to the dialogue between the Virgin and Christ written on the scroll held by the supplicant Virgin on frescoes and icons.

¹⁴ 'Un'ufficiatura perduta del Venerdì Santo', 306; Evergetis: A.A. Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie liturgiĉeskich rukopisej* (3 vols, Kiev and St Petersburg, 1895–1917, repr. Hildesheim 1965), vol. 1, 554. The English translation used here is based on that by R. Jordan, ed. and trans., *The Synaxarion of the Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis. Vol. 2: March to August: The Movable Cycle*, BBT 6.6 (Belfast, 2005), 497. I wish to thank Dr Jordan for sharing his translation with me before it was published, and for his helpful observations on aspects of the Evergetis text.

¹⁵ Dmitrievsky, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 554. It should be noted that although both the mode and the *heirmos* stipulated for this kanon in the *Typikon* correspond to those of

This evening service at the Evergetis monastery, marked by its *kanon threnodies*, was, claimed the editor of the *kanon*, a special service that had been added to Good Friday celebrations in the late eleventh century.¹⁶ And this concept of a liturgical service in the Komnenian period that was centred upon the lament of the Virgin and performed on Good Friday evening was an attractive one to art historians seeking to understand the Virgin's increasing role in the iconography of the Passion of Christ and the emotional tenor of Komnenian depictions of the Entombment. The many studies that have adopted the suggestion of the anonymous editor of the *kanon* include the groundbreaking works of Demetrios Pallas on the Passion and Burial of Christ, of Henry Maguire on images of the sorrowing Virgin, and of Hans Belting on the iconography of the Man of Sorrows and the development of the *Epitaphios*.¹⁷

But if we pick apart this 'new' Good Friday service, we find that it is not something all that new, but rather a modification of three extant and overlapping liturgical cycles: the first being the *daily* compline service, that is, the prayers and hymns for the Eleventh Hour service that took place every day of the year; the second being the weekly *Friday* compline service, that is, the hymns and prayers specific to *Friday* compline; and the third, the hymns and prayers specific to *Good Friday* compline. A word of clarification is required.

Daily compline

Byzantine monastic compline consisted of a number of prayers and psalms, among them the penitential Psalm 50, followed, in monasteries of the Middle Byzantine period, by the singing of a *kanon parakletikos*, or supplicatory,

the Metaphrastes *kanon*, the incipit is not actually provided in the *Typikon*, so that the assumption that the Metaphrastes *kanon* is the one sung at the Evergetis cannot be proven beyond doubt. The incipit and the attribution to Metaphrastes is provided in other manuscripts, however; for example, the 15th-c. Vat. gr. 1517 (fol. 64r), where after Vespers 'we go out into the narthex, sing Psalm 50, and straightway the following *kanon*, in which the lament (θρήνος) of the Theometer unfolds (δειλίηπται). Hymn of Kyr Symeon Metaphrastes, 1st ode, second plagal mode; [heirmos] Κύματι θαλάσσης; [incipit] Θέλων σου τὸ πλάσμα'. In the *Typikon* of the monastery of the Saviour at Messina, dated 1133, Good Friday compline includes the singing of the '4-ode *kanon* of Andrew' after Psalm 50: M. Arranz, *Le typicon du monastère du Saint-Sauveur à Messine* (Rome, 1969), 242. It is unclear what this *kanon* may have been (but see S. Eustratiades, *Theotokarion* [Chennevières-sur-Marne, 1931], 87–90, 311–14, nos 27, 97).

¹⁶ 'Un'ufficiatura perduta del Venerdì Santo', 306. The liturgical context for the singing of the *kanon* is rarely as precisely defined as it is in the Evergetis *Typikon* or Vat. gr. 1517 (see preceding note): in Athos, Lavra Δ 45 (12th c.), the *kanon* is to be sung at the 'pannychis' of Good Friday; in Vat. gr. 1072 (12th c.) and in Vat. gr. 731 (13th c.) on Good Friday 'in the evening'.

¹⁷ Pallas, *Die Passion und Bestattung Christi in Byzanz*, esp. 31, 33–4, 56; Maguire, *Art and Eloquence*, esp. 101–2; H. Belting, 'An image and its function in the liturgy: the Man of Sorrows in Byzantium', *DOP* 34/35 (1980–81), 1–16, esp. 3, 5; *idem*, *The Image and its Public in the Middle Ages. Form and Function of Early Paintings of the Passion* (New York, 1990), 97–103.

kanon.¹⁸ This kanon for daily compline voices a fervent appeal to one or another holy figure, sometimes the saint of the day, sometimes the Virgin, to intercede with Christ on behalf of the individual at this, the eleventh hour, before the arrival of night and sleep, with their intimations of mortality. Daily compline concludes with a section that is essentially an abbreviated office for the dead.

Friday compline

At compline on Fridays, the *kanon parakletikos* – or supplicatory hymn that is part of daily compline – was always addressed to the Virgin, and she figures largely in all of the other prayers in this service as well. The Friday evening office known as the ‘presbeia’, which replaced or extended compline in this period in Constantinople, was particularly elaborate.¹⁹ Friday evening was also the time at which monks commemorated the dead of their own community, sometimes by visiting the monastery’s burial chamber and/or by singing a *kanon nekrosimos*, a funerary kanon.²⁰

Good Friday compline

When Good Friday compline came around, the regular Friday *kanon parakletikos* to the Virgin was replaced by a *kanon threnetikos* of the Virgin herself; the structure of the service otherwise differs little from that of any ordinary Friday compline.²¹

¹⁸ On compline, see A. Raes, ‘Les complies dans les rites orientaux’, *OCP* 17 (1951), 133–45; Arranz, *Le typicon du monastère du Saint-Sauveur à Messine*, xlvii–xlix, 385–6.

¹⁹ On the *presbeia*, see N.P. Ševčenko, ‘Icons in the liturgy’, *DOP* 45 (1991), 45–57, esp. 50–6. On the *presbeia* at the Pantokrator, see P. Gautier, *Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantokrator* (Paris, 1974), 75.750–4; 77.795–811, trans. R. Jordan in J. Thomas and A.C. Hero, eds, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents* (5 vols, Washington DC, 2000), vol. 2, 753–5; B. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park PA, 2006), 169–73. At Messina: Arranz, *Le typicon du monastère du Saint-Sauveur à Messine*, xlix, 210–11, 428–9.

²⁰ Evergetis: Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 510, 523, 526, 533, 536; and 571 as ‘a *nekrosimos pannychis* to the tombs of our holy fathers and brothers’. Pantokrator: Gautier, *Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantokrator*, 75.750–4 (*presbeia*), 107.1335–6 (‘Vespers with *pannychis*’), trans. R. Jordan in Thomas and Hero, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, vol. 2, 753–5, 766. At the Kecharitomene, after Vespers on Friday the nuns are to sing a *kanon nekrosimon*, a funerary kanon, for the deceased sisters: P. Gautier, ‘Le typikon de la Théotokos Kécharitôméné’, *REB* 43 (1985), 117–18, especially lines 1746–8, trans. R. Jordan, in Thomas and Hero, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, vol. 2, 700. Isaac Komnenos, founder of the monastery of the Virgin Kosmosoteira, stipulates in his *Typikon* that the memorial for his soul be chanted before his tomb *daily*, following vespers: L. Petit, ‘Typikon du monastère de la Kosmosoteira près d’Ainos (1152)’, *IRAIK* 13 (1908), 22.31 – 23.9; 64.17–21; trans. N.P. Ševčenko in Thomas and Hero, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, vol. 2, 801, 839.

²¹ On Good Friday services in general, see Janeras, *Le Vendredi-Saint dans la*

In short, a supplicatory kanon is a regular part of *daily* compline, and a supplicatory kanon to the Virgin or a funerary kanon is a regular part of *Friday* compline. The presence of a kanon of the Virgin's lament at Good Friday compline, then, does not in itself indicate the existence of a new liturgical service, but rather a change in content and tone. The supplications and prayers for the dead, intrinsic to daily compline, plus the celebration of the Virgin and tomb visitations intrinsic to Friday compline, culminate and burst forth at Good Friday compline into the grief of the Virgin over the death of her son. As a result the monastic community, by chanting the kanon and voicing the words of the Virgin, became to a certain extent mourners themselves over the body of Christ.

Where did this Good Friday service take place? The Evergetis *Typikon* gives us a certain amount of information. It reveals that the monks of the Evergetis were occupied earlier in the day in celebrating the royal or great hours, with their full complement of Passion readings for each monastic hour. But when the ninth hour came, they were to vacate the katholikon, the main church of the monastery, so that it could be cleaned for Holy Saturday *orthros*, and they were to head instead to the church of the Holy Apostles, another church presumably also located within the monastic enclosure. There they were to celebrate the ninth hour, then vespers, and there, it would seem, the service of compline as well.²²

In the absence of evidence for the setting of Good Friday compline in other monastic institutions, a look at the setting of regular Friday evening services may be of some interest.²³ We know the most about the Friday evening 'presbeia', as it unfolded in the Pantokrator monastery in Constantinople founded by the emperor John II Komnenos in 1136.²⁴ Here compline was followed every Friday by a visit to the tombs in the Heroon, the monastery's burial chapel, which lay between the katholikon dedicated to Christ Pantokrator and a second church served by secular clergy, dedicated to the Virgin Eleousa, the Virgin of Compassion. The Heroon was to house the tombs of the emperor John II, his wife, and their descendants.²⁵ It was

tradition liturgique byzantine; S. Parenti, 'La celebrazione delle Ore del Venerdi Santo nell' Euchologio ΓβΧ di Grottaferrata (X–XI sec.)', *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata*, n.s. 44 (1990), 81–125; H. Wybrew, *Orthodox Lent, Holy Week and Easter: Liturgical Texts with Commentary* (Crestwood NY, 1997), esp. 105–9.

²² Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, vol. 1, 553–4. The text says that they are to celebrate both compline and the kanon in the church (*naos*). I take this to mean they are to celebrate the service in the church of the Holy Apostles, rather than in the katholikon, which was probably still closed up at that time. On the various chapels of the monastery, see L. Rodley, 'The Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis, Constantinople: where it was and what it looked like', in M. Mullett and A. Kirby, eds, *The Theotokos Evergetis and eleventh-century monasticism*, BBTT 6.1 (Belfast, 1994), 17–29, esp. 28–9.

²³ See p. 252 and notes 19 and 20 above.

²⁴ Gautier, *Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantokrator*, and the other works cited in note 19 above.

²⁵ On the tomb of John's son and successor Manuel, see A.H.S. Megaw, 'Notes on recent work of the Byzantine Institute in Istanbul', *DOP* 17 (1963), 333–64, esp.

adorned with scenes of the Passion of Christ: according to the Pantokrator *Typikon*, the Crucifixion and the Anastasis occupied two of its 'apses', and two additional compositions together occupied a third apse. One of this latter pair is referred to in the *Typikon* as the 'Hagios Taphos', or Holy Sepulchre, and the other as Christ appearing to the Marys.²⁶ Every Friday, right after compline, a procession involving monks and the secular clergy, plus a number of icons, was to enter the Heroon and pass by the royal tombs, where prayers for the royal dead ('ektenes deesis') were to be offered.²⁷

Other *Typika* suggest that modest monastic burial chapels were visited, as was the grand imperial burial church at the Pantokrator, not only on anniversaries of the death of those buried there, but also regularly on Friday nights.²⁸ One such may have been the crypt under the katholikon of the monastery of Hosios Loukas in Greece, of the early eleventh century (Plate 15.1).²⁹ The crypt housed the tombs of former abbots of the monastery, making it just the kind of chapel that, one imagines, would have been visited by the monastic community every Friday after compline.³⁰ Like the Heroon at the Pantokrator, the walls above the tombs in this crypt were painted with scenes of the Passion of Christ.³¹ Among these is a fresco of the Entombment (Plate 15.2): it shows the dead Christ entirely bound up in a white winding sheet, with a white cloth wrapped around his head; he is being lowered into a stone

342, figures A and D; R. Ousterhout, 'Architecture, art and Komnenian ideology at the Pantokrator Monastery', in N. Necipoğlu, ed., *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life* (Leiden, 2001), 133–50, esp. 148–50. See also 256–59 below. On the architecture of the monastery in general, see R. Ousterhout, 'Interpreting the construction history of the Zeyrek Camii in Istanbul (Monastery of Christ Pantokrator)', *Second International Congress on Studies in Ancient Structures*, Istanbul 2001, ed. G. Arun and N. Seçkin (Istanbul 2001), vol. 1, 19–27.

²⁶ Gautier, *Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantokrator*, 75.775–8, trans. Jordan in Thomas and Hero, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, vol. 2, 754. The tombs in the Heroon were also the setting for the annual commemorations of the members of the royal family buried there.

²⁷ Gautier, *Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantokrator*, 75.750–4. John's precise instructions for the memorial services that were to be held at his tomb were apparently contained in a separate document, now lost. See *ibid.*, 81.880–2, trans. Jordan in Thomas and Hero, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, vol. 2, 756.

²⁸ On the placement, liturgical use and decoration of burial chapels, see the fundamental study by G. Babić, *Les chapelles annexes des églises byzantines* (Paris, 1969), esp. 40–58, 162–73. See also C.L. Connor, *Miracles in Medieval Byzantium. The Crypt at Hosios Loukas and its Frescoes* (Princeton NJ, 1991), 83–93.

²⁹ Connor, *Miracles in Medieval Byzantium*; N. Chatzidakis, *Hosios Loukas* (Athens, 1996), 70–91.

³⁰ The remains of Hosios Loukas himself were brought upstairs and placed adjacent to the north arm of the katholikon, so as to be more accessible to pilgrims.

³¹ There were scenes of the Entry into Jerusalem, Washing of the Feet, Last Supper, Crucifixion, Deposition, Entombment and Marys at the Tomb (these last two together in one lunette), Incredulity of Thomas, plus the Dormition (Koimesis) of the Virgin. For the Entombment, see Connor, *Miracles in Medieval Byzantium*, 37–9, pl. 10, figs 67–9; Chatzidakis, *Hosios Loukas*, fig. 84.

sarcophagos by Joseph and Nikodemos. The Virgin looks on from behind, gazing at the head of Christ.³²

A Cypriot burial chapel of about a century later had a very similar iconographic programme, and it too may have been the site of weekly as well as annual commemorations of the dead. This chapel, now in ruins, is near to, but outside the walls of, the monastery of St John Chrysostom at Koutsovendis in Cyprus. It was originally decorated with frescoes of the Crucifixion, the Deposition, the Entombment and the Anastasis, in arched recesses. Of these only the Entombment is reasonably well preserved today; it occupies the north arched recess (Plate 15.3). The frescoes in the katholikon of this monastery date from the early twelfth century, and the frescoes in its burial chapel are thought to have been executed in the same period.³³ In this fresco, which is a century later than the one in the crypt of Hosios Loukas, Christ's body is stretched out on the winding sheet, clad only in a loincloth. The Virgin presses her cheek against that of Christ, John kisses his hand and Joseph of Arimathea his feet. Nikodemos stands nearby and two Marys look on from the left. The doorway to the grotto tomb is at the far right. On the blue background are the words: Ὁ ἐνταφιασμός.

³² On the iconography of the Entombment, see K. Weitzmann, 'The origin of the Threnos', in M. Meiss, ed., *De Artibus Opuscula XL. Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky* (2 vols, New York, 1961), vol. 1, 476–90, repr. in K. Weitzmann, *Byzantine Book Illumination and Ivories* (London, 1980), no. IX; I. Spatharakis, 'The influence of the Lithos in the development of the iconography of the Threnos', in Moss and Kiefer, eds, *Byzantine East, Latin West*, 435–46. See also G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'évangile* (Paris, 1916, repr. 1960), 489–516; M. Soteriou, 'Entaphiasmos – Threnos', *DChAE* 7 (1973–4), 139–48; L. Hadermann-Misguich, 'Rencontre des tendances liturgiques et narratives de l'épithaphios thrénos dans une icône du XVe siècle conservée à Patmos', *BZ* 59 (1966), 359–64; A. Weyl Carr, 'The murals of the bema and naos: the paintings of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', in the forthcoming monograph, *Asinou: The Architecture and Murals of the Panagia Phorbiotissa, Cyprus*, ed. A.W. Carr and A. Nikolaides (Washington DC, 2012). These two pieces of cloth are mentioned in the Gospel of John (20:6–7) as 'ta othonia ... kai to soudarion', and, in compositions depicting the Marys arriving to find the angel seated at the empty tomb, the pieces of cloth often appear inside the grotto, floating in the black gloom of the cave, having been left behind by the risen Christ. The winding sheet (*ta othonia*, according to John, but also known as the *sin doni*) was kept, along with other Passion relics, in the Pharos, the palace chapel in Constantinople (see Magdalino, as in note 39 below). Around 1204 it was housed in the Blachernai monastery, and exhibited there every Friday: Robert of Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, trans. E.H. McNeal (New York, 1936; repr. Toronto, 1996), 112.

³³ A. Papageorghiou, *Masterpieces of the Byzantine Art of Cyprus* (Nicosia, 1965), pl. XV:1 (dated to the mid-12th c.); C. Mango, 'The Monastery of St. Chrysostomos at Koutsovendis (Cyprus) and its wall paintings', *DOP* 44 (1990), 64; C. Mango and E.J.W. Hawkins, 'The hermitage of St. Neophytos and its wall-paintings', *DOP* 20 (1966), 151 and figure 120; A. and J. Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus* (London, 1985), 463–5, figs 277–8. M. Bardswell, 'A visit to some of the Maronite villages of Cyprus', *Eastern Churches Quarterly* 3 (1938–39), 304–8, esp. 307–8. On Koutsovendis, see also now T. Papacostas, 'The history and architecture of the Monastery of St John Chrysostomos at Koutsovendis, Cyprus', *DOP* 61 (2007), 29–148, which describes the architecture of the burial chapel (100–2), but not the frescoes.

Above this scene of the Entombment, on its upper red frame, is a fragmentary inscription which can be tentatively and partially reconstructed as follows: '[Joseph] of old flees bearing thee in life (?), and now another Joseph, bearing [thee], buries thee.'³⁴ The caption is interesting, as it is a version of one of the so-called *enkomia* or *megalynaria*, the verses that alternate with those of Psalm 118, the *Amomos* or funeral chant, at *orthros* of Holy Saturday.³⁵ As far as I can tell, this early twelfth-century caption is our very first indication of the existence of these *enkomia*: there is no surviving manuscript evidence for any of these verses earlier than the thirteenth century.³⁶

This damaged caption on the fresco at Koutsovendis is interesting for another reason as well, namely, for the particular verse that was chosen out of the 176 or so possible ones (there are 176 verses to the *Amomos* Psalm, Psalm 118, and each is accompanied by an *enkomion*). This particular one, 'Joseph of old flees bearing thee, O Saviour, and now another (Joseph) buries thee', which emphasises Joseph over all the other mourners, seems to invite the bearer of a new corpse to this monastic burial chapel to see himself as yet another Joseph who lays out the corpse and mourns over it as though participating in the Entombment itself.³⁷

This sort of personal identification with events of the Passion can be found in other forms in the Komnenian period.³⁸ A classic example is the case of the emperor Manuel I, who brought the so-called stone of unction, the *lithos*, to Constantinople from Ephesus in 1169/70. (The *lithos* was thought to be the stone on which Christ's body had been laid out in preparation for burial; it was of red marble and was reported to have retained on its surface traces of the tears of the Virgin.)³⁹ Manuel is said to have carried the *lithos* on his own

³⁴ Φέρων σε φεύγει δε (σε?) βιῶ ... πάλαι και νῦν Ἰωσήφ ἀλα σε ενθάπτει φέρων.

³⁵ Compare *enkomion* 24 of the third stasis: Φέρων πάλαι φεύγει, Σῶτερ Ἰωσήφ σε, και νῦν σε ἄλλος θάπτει: *Triodion Katanyktikon* (Athens, 1958), 480.

³⁶ Detorakis, 'Anekdotia megalynaria', 223–4. It is assumed, however, that a long oral tradition must have preceded the transcription of the verses and their inclusion into liturgical manuscripts.

³⁷ Compare analogies made with the *Myrrhophoroi* in other *epitaphios threnos* verses: from the second stasis: 'Come, and as the *Myrrhophoroi* let us sing a holy lament (θρήνον ἱερόν) to the dead Christ, that like them we too may hear him say "Chairete!"; from the third stasis: 'Let us all, with understanding (ἐμφρόνως), with the *Myrrhophoroi* anoint the living one as a corpse.' For variant translations, see Mother Mary and K. Ware, *The Lenten Triodion*, 644, 633 and 640. The mention of Joseph probably is also intended to evoke the troparion for Good Friday compline, which migrated in the 14th c. to the liturgy of Chrysostom, to accompany the covering of the gifts at communion: R. Taft, *The Great Entrance. A History of the Transfer of Gifts and Other Pre-Anaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* (2nd edn, Rome, 1978), 244–8.

³⁸ Maguire, 'Two modes of narration in Byzantine art', 389–90. Maguire characterises this as the 'participatory' mode.

³⁹ On the *lithos*, see P. Magdalino, 'L'église du Phare et les reliques de la Passion à Constantinople (VIIe/VIIIe – XIIIe siècles)', in J. Durand and B. Flusin, eds, *Byzance et les reliques du Christ* (Paris, 2004), 15–30, esp. 25, and, in the same volume, S. Lerou, 'L'usage des reliques du Christ par les empereurs aux XIe et XIIe siècles: le Saint Bois et les Saintes Pierres', 159–82, esp. 165, 169, 177–82. Lerou stresses the importance of

shoulders up from the harbour to the Pharos church (the palace chapel that housed Constantinople's Passion relics), and for so doing he was referred to by his contemporaries as a new Joseph, carrying the stone 'as though it were the actual body of God conveying its grace on him'.⁴⁰

After the emperor's death in 1180, the *lithos* was taken from the Pharos chapel and placed alongside Manuel's tomb in the Pantokrator monastery (Figure 15.4), a radical expropriation for private use of a relic that implicitly belonged to the Christian populace as a whole.⁴¹ A lengthy poem was then inscribed on the stone (or more likely, on its pedestal).⁴² It begins by drawing once again the analogy between Manuel and Joseph of Arimathea:

Admire these strange things as thou seest them, O stranger: our lord, the emperor Manuel reenacts (σχηματουργεῖ) the resolve of the disciple (i.e. Joseph of Arimathea) as he bears on his shoulders that stone upon which the Lord's body was placed and prepared (ἐσχηματίσθη) for burial in a winding sheet (σινδώνη). He lifts it up announcing in advance his own burial, that in death he may be buried together with the crucified one and may arise together with our buried Lord.

Then Manuel's widow, the empress Maria, is portrayed as 'that other Maria who secretly brought unguents, [who] once again mixes unguents with her tears ... Now the empress sheds tears like unguents and wears herself out

the 'lien tactile' between the emperor's body and the relic that had touched Christ's body, and reminds us that Manuel had earlier in a similar way hoisted the corpse of his father, emperor John II, onto his shoulders, to bring it home to Constantinople.

⁴⁰ A. van Dieten, ed., *Nicetae Choniatae orationes et epistulae* (Berlin, 1972), 222; trans. H. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit, 1984), 125; John Kinnamos, *Epitome rerum* (Bonn, 1836), 277.7 – 278.5; trans. C. Brand, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus by John Kinnamos* (New York and Guildford CT, 1976), 207–8. An *akolouthia* for the translation of the relic was composed by George Skylitzes: A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta Hierosolymitikes Stachyologias* (5 vols, St Petersburg, 1891–98; repr. Brussels, 1963), vol. 5, 180–9. On the relics in the Pharos church, see Magdalino, 'L'église du Phare'.

⁴¹ Van Dieten, ed., *Nicetae Choniatae orationes et epistulae*, 222; Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium*, 125. See also Lerou, 'L'usage des reliques', 178, on the implicit identification of the tomb of Manuel with the tomb of Christ. For later descriptions of the *lithos*, see G. Majeska, *Russian Travellers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington DC, 1984), 289–90, 292–3, and C. Mango, 'Notes on Byzantine monuments III: tomb of Manuel Comnenus', *DOP* 23–4 (1969–70), notes 32, 35–8.

⁴² The poem was transcribed by Meletios of Ioannina, who died in 1714: C. Mango, 'Notes on Byzantine monuments', 372–5 (text and trans. of the whole poem). On the physical appearance of the tomb, see C. Mango, 'Three imperial Byzantine sarcophagi discovered in 1750', *DOP* 16 (1962), 397–402, esp. 397–9 and fig. 1; G. Fatouros, 'Das Grab des Kaisers Manuel I. Komnenos', *BZ* 93 (2000), 108–12; C. Sode, 'Zu den Grab Kaiser Manuels I. Komnenos', *BZ* 94 (2001), 230–31. A. Zorzi, commentary for the forthcoming revised edition of *Niceta Coniata, Grandezza e catastrofe di Bisanzio (Narratione cronologica)*, vol. I. I wish to thank Professor Zorzi for kindly sharing his notes on the Choniates passage with me. See now N.P. Ševčenko, 'The tomb of Manuel I Komnenos, again', in *Proceedings of the First Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium* (Istanbul 2010), 609–16.

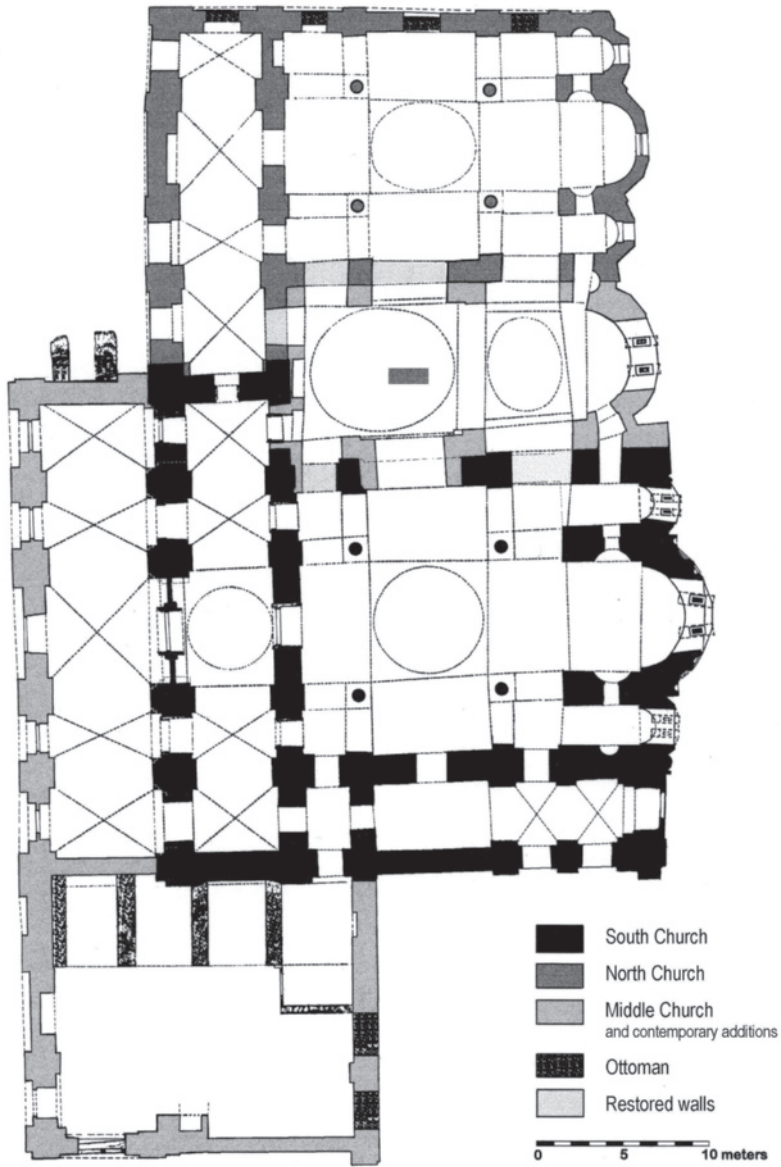


Fig. 15.4 Istanbul, Pantokrator monastery (Zeyrek Camii), ground plan with the presumed location of the tomb of Manuel I in the Heroon (Middle Church). [Source: courtesy Robert Ousterhout]

before the stone, standing there ... '. She might even break into the tomb and steal the corpse 'and lay down her heart as a winding-sheet (σινδόνα) and prepare unguents – tears in the place of aloes, and unguents in the place of myrrh – and in a mournful pose (Mango: in mournful fashion) utter this lament (πενθικῶ σχήματι ταῦτα κωκύση)' over the tomb of Manuel. Maria's lament is very reminiscent of that of the Virgin: 'Break, O my heart, and receive my master within my much-sighing bosom – him whom you held in your heart, and whom you loved/kissed ... my spirit has been rent and my breath has flown away'.⁴³

Manuel's close association with the *lithos* in death offered him the possibility of sharing in Christ's Resurrection. Scenes of Christ's Entombment may have performed a similar function in this period, that is, the mid- to late twelfth century.⁴⁴ Take the example of Nerezi, a church painted in 1164, which has a sequence of Passion images, among them an enormous Entombment fresco that fills the entire north wall of the north arm of the naos (Plate 15.5).⁴⁵ It is surprising to encounter the Entombment in such a prominent position, especially in a church which is not a burial chapel, and to have the body of Christ being taken to the west, away from the altar, rather than towards it, as one might expect. Curious too is the odd half-sitting, half-rushing figure of the Virgin, a pose that has often puzzled viewers of this famous fresco.⁴⁶ But this all makes some sense when we take into account that the chapel in the northwest corner of the church, the chapel that lies right ahead, so to speak, of the burial procession, housed a tomb in an *arcosolium*, just possibly the tomb of the founder (Figure 15.6).⁴⁷ The body of Christ is being carried not only toward the grotto seen at the left edge of the fresco, but also toward this tomb on the other side of the wall.

In some later frescoes, this conceit becomes more explicit. In two related monuments, the Holy Anargyroi at Kastoria, of the later twelfth century, and the Church of Kurbinovo, of 1191, the fresco of the Entombment is again

⁴³ ὄν εἶχες ἐγκάρδιον, ὄνπερ ἐφίλεις. Lerou stresses the importance of the *lithos* as a relic that unites the Virgin and Christ: 'L'usage des reliques', 179.

⁴⁴ It can be discerned in Byzantine burial rites in this period as well: E. Velkovska, 'Funeral rites according to the Byzantine liturgical sources', *DOP* 55 (2001), 21–51, esp. 38; 44–5 shows how the choice of lessons reveals 'the clear association of the burial of a Christian with that of Christ', as does the pouring of oil, starting in the twelfth century, directly onto the corpse, not into the still empty tomb. See also S.E.J. Gerstel, 'Painted sources for female piety in medieval Byzantium', *DOP* 52 (1998), 89–111, especially 101–3, on the images of female saints in the narthex and other funerary spaces 'who participated in the ongoing lamentation over the deceased'.

⁴⁵ I. Sinkević, *The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi. Architecture, Programme, Patronage* (Weisbaden, 2000), esp. 50–2, figs XLVI, XLVIII.

⁴⁶ For example, most recently, I. Kalavrezou, 'Exchanging embrace. The body of salvation', in Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God*, 103–15, esp. 108–9.

⁴⁷ The chapel lies directly behind the fresco of the Deposition that was painted on the western wall of the north arm of the naos. The chapel is accessible only from the narthex. On the decoration and funerary function of the chapel, see Sinkević, *The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi*, 16–18, 71, fig. XXIV, pls 1, 5, 26. The tomb measured 1.90 x .68 m.

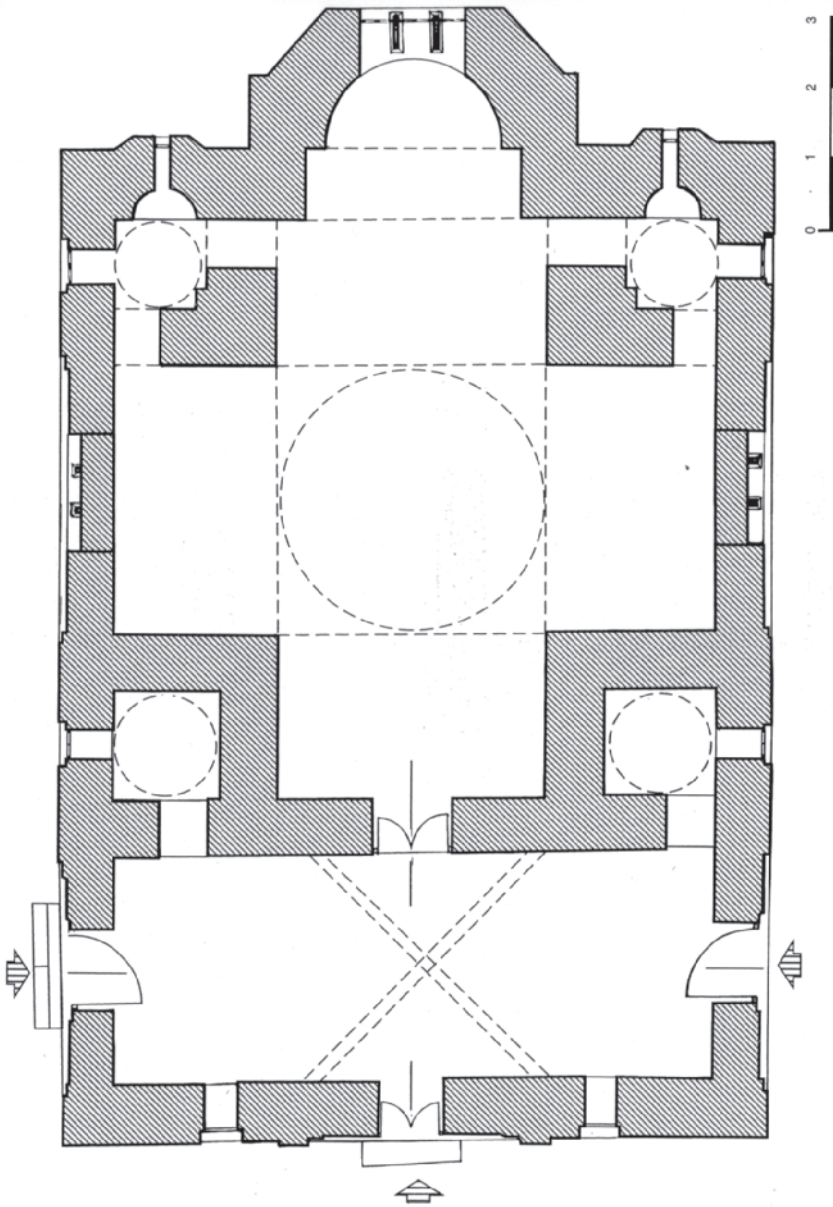


Fig. 15.6 Nerezi, St. Panteleimon, ground plan. [Source: courtesy Ida Sinkević]

located on the north wall, and the Virgin has again this strange half-running pose; but now the body of Christ is being directed not only toward the opening of his grotto tomb, but also toward a real door immediately adjacent to the fresco.⁴⁸ In the case of the Anargyroi (Plate 15.7), this door leads directly into the north aisle of the church, a space which, painted as it is with a number of donor portraits, a cycle of St George with an inscription mentioning the Last Judgment, plus other burial-related themes, surely once contained tombs.⁴⁹ The position of this fresco can scarcely be coincidental. At Kurbinovo (Plate 15.8), there was once a door in the north wall immediately adjacent to the fresco (it is now a window): although we have no knowledge of what once lay outside this north door, the similarity between the depicted grotto and the lunette that once crowned the door outside is striking.⁵⁰ The hillside rose sharply to the north of the church, perhaps heightening the suggestion that a grotto tomb lay outside. One does get the impression in these monuments that the burial procession of Christ is being directed toward the church's own tombs, so that, as Maria said of Manuel, 'in death he may be buried together with the crucified one and may arise together with our buried Lord'.

By around 1200, the depiction of the Entombment as a burial procession had given way to that of the Lamentation over the corpse of Christ now stretched out on the stone, or *lithos* (Plate 15.9). Ioannes Spatharakis studied the introduction of the *lithos* into the traditional burial iconography, and has argued convincingly that it reflects the arrival of the *lithos* relic in Constantinople under Manuel I.⁵¹ The incorporation of the *lithos* into the composition inevitably brings the burial procession to a halt, and switches the focus to the wild and expressive grief of the Virgin and the Marys. The scene acquires a new designation, *epitaphios threnos*, or the burial lament, which replaces the older caption, *entaphiasmos*, or Entombment. A fresco in the refectory at Patmos, probably dating to the early thirteenth century, is thought to be the oldest case in which the words *epitaphios threnos* are attached to a Lamentation scene.⁵²

The new caption, *epitaphios threnos*, points to some liturgical developments that may be as relevant to these iconographic developments as was the arrival

⁴⁸ S. Pelekanides, *Kastoria I. Byzantinai toichographiai* (Thessalonike, 1953), pls 17b, 18; S. Pelekanides and M. Chatzidakis, *Kastoria* (Athens, 1984), 32–3, figs 10, 12; L. Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo. Les fresques de St Georges et la peinture byzantine du XIIIe siècle* (Brussels, 1975), 155–8; figs 74–5, 77a.

⁴⁹ Pelekanides and Chatzidakis, *Kastoria*, 23–4, 39–43, figs 1, 20–3.

⁵⁰ Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo*, 15–16. For the lunette over the doorway, see 12, fig. 154.

⁵¹ Spatharakis, 'The influence of the Lithos in the development of the iconography of the Threnos', esp. 437–8.

⁵² E. Kollias, *Patmos* (Athens, 1990), 27, 29, figs 25–6; A. Kominis, ed., *Patmos. The Treasures of the Monastery* (Athens, 1988), 96, fig. 37. Both of these authors date the fresco to the second half of the 13th c., while Spatharakis, 'Lithos', 439, dates it to c. 1200. It should be noted that the hymnographer leaning into the scene holds a scroll with the text of the kanon for Holy Saturday *orthros* by Kosmas: already elements of Good Friday and of Holy Saturday are being combined.

of the *lithos*. The Holy Saturday service known as the *epitaphios threnos*, though an *orthros* service, had, by the fourteenth century and possibly even earlier, moved back in time and was being celebrated on Friday night instead.⁵³ The mimetic burial procession involving both clergy and congregation, and the censing of the body, both clustering around the *epitaphios*, the textile embroidered with the image of the dead Christ, were now also shifted to Friday night.⁵⁴ The compline service on Good Friday with its kanon of the lamenting Virgin, as outlined in the Evergetis *Typikon*, seems to disappear, and the images of the Virgin or the Marys or Joseph assembled around the body of Christ in the twelfth-century frescoes emerge as real people clustered around the embroidered image of the body of Christ. Now the entire congregation of the faithful 're-enacts' the Lamentation, having now, in the form of the *epitaphios* textile, their own corpse of Christ to mourn.⁵⁵

Exactly when Holy Saturday *orthros* was shifted to Friday evening remains unclear. But I suspect that when Holy Saturday *orthros* began to be celebrated on Friday night instead of early on Saturday morning, the Good Friday night after-dinner compline service was squeezed out and the theme of its kanon, the lament of the Virgin, became absorbed into the lengthy *epitaphios threnos* service and its accompanying real-life enactment of a burial procession.

If so, then the twelfth-century frescoes of the Entombment may be said to represent a stage in this development. Their carefully planned placement in the church, and their association with tomb chambers, gave the Entombment compositions with their emphasis on the lamenting Virgin a relevance that went beyond their annual Good Friday context, wedding the Entombment and the promise of Resurrection to the broader context of individual burials commemorated every Friday evening. The frescoes offered to the mourner the possibility of a visual burial mimesis that preceded, and to an extent may even have led to, the real-life burial mimesis that was to emerge in the Palaiologan period, and which continues to take place every Good Friday even today.

⁵³ Taft, 'In the Bridegroom's absence', 91 and R. Taft, 'A tale of two cities. The Byzantine Holy Week Triduum as a paradigm of liturgical history', in *idem*, *Liturgy in Byzantium*, no. VI, 21–41, esp. 24, 31–2. This new position constitutes what is referred to as an 'anticipated *orthros*'.

⁵⁴ As a result of this move to Friday, a procession of this kind can take place twice in the same day, at Good Friday Vespers and at Holy Saturday *orthros*. On the duplication, see Janeras, *Le Vendredi-Saint dans la tradition liturgique byzantine*, 394–402; Taft, 'In the Bridegroom's absence', 92, and *idem*, 'A tale of two cities', 24.

⁵⁵ Since this paper was written, Robert Ousterhout delivered a paper treating similar themes at the 42nd Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, held at Kings College London and the Courtauld Institute of Art, 20–22 March 2009. This paper was entitled 'Women at tombs: narrative, theatricality, and the contemplative mode'. I thank Prof Ousterhout for kindly sharing with me an earlier version of his paper.

Miraculous Icons: Medium, Imagination, and Presence¹

Bissera V. Pentcheva

Whenever we discuss the Byzantine icon, our perception is immediately directed to icons painted on wood panels with tempera or encaustic. I have recently challenged this perception by demonstrating how the Byzantine iconophile image theory of the early ninth century promoted the metal relief icon as the ideal, of course without canceling the possibility for painted images.² In this essay I will deepen my enquiry into the medium of icons by focusing on the affair of Leo of Chalcedon (1081–95) and the late eleventh-century narrative of the miraculous icon of the Theotokos Romaia (named ‘the Roman’ since it allegedly resided in Rome for a time). What definition of the icon emerges in these texts and how does the medium affect the perception of the icon and its power?

Although Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) seized the throne in 1081, he and his family had to fight both internal and external enemies to keep their hold of power. To that end, they needed funds to pay the army, but the state treasury was empty. They found a solution to their financial crisis in the expropriation of church property. In 1081 Anna Dalassena and Isaac Komnenos, the mother and brother of Alexios, summoned a synod in Constantinople which approved the requisition of ecclesiastical treasures. An opposition headed by Leo of Chalcedon arose against this imperial policy. It pushed the emperor to issue a *semeioma* (record) in 1082, in which he committed to redress the damages suffered by the churches and never to resort to such policy again. But despite these promises, the Komnenoi repeated the requisitions in 1086 and 1091. Leo, who continued to oppose the emperor, was first accused and condemned of insubordination and stripped of his bishop’s title in 1086; he was then exiled

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Greek are by the author. This essay presents a concise version of the more developed analysis, which appears in B. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park PA, 2010).

² B. Pentcheva, ‘The performative icon’, *The Art Bulletin* 88/4 (2006), 630–58 and *eadem*, *The Sensual Icon*.

to Sozopolis in 1087. During his exile (1087–95) Leo wrote a letter exposing his views about icons.³ This document gave the pretext for Alexios to summon the council of Blachernai (end of 1094 – February/March 1095) and finally to condemn Leo's views as heretical.⁴ Eustratios, the bishop of Nicaea, who wrote two treatises on icon theory denouncing Leo's position around the year 1111, further strengthened the imperial position on icons.⁵

Annemarie Weyl Carr has written an important essay on Leo of Chalcedon's controversy and its repercussions on art production and the use of icons in the second half of the eleventh century.⁶ She has revealed how Leo upheld a view of the icon as 'presence', thereby disconnecting it from the referential model of analogy between image and text. According to Leo, the icon of Christ possesses his 'divinely hypostatic character' (*theohypostatos character*). This special *character* required 'adorational veneration' (*latreutike proskynesis*), while the matter on which it was set demanded 'honourable veneration' (*timetike proskynesis*).⁷

Character is an important term in Byzantine image theory. It means an 'impression' or 'indentation' left by a body on a material surface. When this intaglio is in turn imprinted on matter, it creates a 'sealing' (*typos*). Thus, *character* and *typos* form a pair: a negative indentation (*character*) that could produce a series of identical positive imprints (*typoi*).⁸ In post-iconoclast theory the icon is a *typos*, a sealing or imprint. By contrast, the mandylion,

³ The letters of Leo of Chalcedon, Nicholas of Adrianopolis and Basil of Euchaïta were first published by Lauriotès, who found them all in a manuscript at the Great Lavra of Mount Athos (Lavra, Ms. gr. 139, of the thirteenth century, yet not recorded in the catalogue of Eustratiades): see A. Lavriotes, 'Ιστορικόν ζήτημα', *Ekklesiastike Aletheia* 24 (1900), 403–7; 411–16; 441–6. Since then two treatises of Leo of Chalcedon have also been found in another manuscript, Escorial, Royal Library, Y.II.7, from the thirteenth century, formerly in the collection of Francisco Patrizzi (Patricius) (1529–97) who lived in Dalmatia, Padua, Ferrara, and Rome (I have not so far consulted this manuscript).

⁴ P. Stephanou, 'Le process de Léon de Chalcédoine', *OCP* 9 (1943), 5–64; *idem*, 'La doctrine de Léon de Chalcédoine et de ses adversaires sur les images', *OCP* 12 (1946), 176–99. Stephanou's dates were corrected by V. Grumel in *Studi e Testi* 123. *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati* (3 vols, Vatican City, 1946), vol. 3, 116–35; *idem*, 'L'affaire de Léon de Chalcédoine. Le décret ou 'semeioma' d'Alexis Ier Comnène 2086', *EO* 39 (1939–42), 333–41; *idem*, 'L'affaire de Léon de Chalcédoine. Le chrysobulle d'Alexis Ier sur les objets sacrés', *EB* 2 (1944), 126–33. An extensive discussion of the events and the primary sources may be found in A. Glavinias, 'Η επί Αλεξίου Κομνήνου 1081–1081 περί ιερών σκευών, κειμηλίων και άγιων εικόνων έρίς 1081–95 (Thessalonike, 1972); P. Gautier, 'Le synode des Blachernes (fin 1094). Étude prosopographique', *REB* 29 (1971), 213–84; J. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 24 (Washington DC, 1987), 192–9.

⁵ A.K. Demetrakopoulos, *Έκκλησιαστική Βιβλιοθήκη* (Leipzig, 1866, repr. Hildesheim, 1965), 127–60.

⁶ A. Weyl Carr, 'Leo of Chalcedon and the icons', in C. Moss and K. Kiefer, eds, *Byzantine East, Latin West. Art Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann* (Princeton, 1995), 579–84.

⁷ Carr, 'Leo of Chalcedon', 580–2. Leo expressed his theory in a letter to Nicholas, bishop of Adrianopolis, 1093/94; see Lavriotes, 'Ιστορικόν ζήτημα', 414–16, 445–7.

⁸ Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, chapter 3.

an *acheiropoietos* object (*a-*, 'without', *heir-*, 'hand', *poietos-*, 'made'), produced when Christ pressed a piece of cloth to his face, is in fact a *character*; that is, a direct negative impression of the holy face.⁹ Not surprisingly, a *character* is allegedly imbued with sacred energy because it has been produced by direct contact with the sacred body. The term *theohypostatos character*, which Leo of Chalcedon uses in the late eleventh century, is a quotation from the tenth-century *troparion* traditionally sung on the feast of the mandylion (16 August). *Character* thus forms the lynch-pin in Leo's belief in the miraculous icon.¹⁰

While not drawing this fine distinction between regular icons as *typoi* versus the mandylion as a miraculous *theohypostatos character*, Carr sees Leo's image theory as a general marker of the intensified belief in thaumaturgic icons in Constantinople in the second half of the eleventh century. She writes:

One senses in Leo a person who had looked carefully at what was going on around him – at what even people like the sharply rational Alexios were actually doing when they responded to icons. This must have been something to do with the appeal that his letter on the icons exercised. Long spurned, [Leo's] theory of icons, professed in his letter of 1093/94, may be the most conscientiously observed and lucidly articulated explication of the relation of contemporary Byzantines to their icons.¹¹

The late-eleventh-century Byzantine belief in miraculous icons and the power of these icons to function as independent charismatic agencies is subtly juxtaposed to the situation of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Carr framed her discourse on Leo with the exposition of a boom of painted icon production at Sinai in the late twelfth century. For Carr, much of this production suggested the taming of the miraculous icon and its integration in the controlled framework of the iconostasis.¹² Yet, in this process of taming, was there a switch in medium?

This teasing notion of the late twelfth-century painted icons as the tamed version of the powerful, free agency charismatic icons of the eleventh century remains with me every time I read Carr's essay. There is something mysterious, unresolved, still hushed about icon and medium, which stand at the centre of this transformation from the thaumaturgic to the iconostasis-fixed painted icon. In other words, did the discourse on icons during the Komnenian iconoclasm affect the medium of icons? And a second question arises: what was the medium of the miraculous icons in Constantinople at the time?

⁹ Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, *Narratio de imagine Edessena*, PG 113, cols. 423–54, esp. cols. 429D–33B; edition and commentary in E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende* (3 vols, Leipzig, 1899), vol. 1, 29**–107**, English trans. in I. Wilson, *The Shroud of Turin: The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ* (Garden City NY, 1978), 235–51, esp. 239–40 (sections 8–11).

¹⁰ V. Grumel, 'Léon de Chalcédoine et le canon de la fête du Saint Mandylion', *AnalBoll* 68 (1950), 135–52.

¹¹ Carr, 'Leo of Chalcedon', 584.

¹² Carr, 'Leo of Chalcedon', 579, 584.

It seems that metal would figure prominently in the Komnenian discourse on icons. For metal was the material pursued through the requisitions. By melting it down, it could be re-used to mint coins and to produce armour for the armies. A painted icon would have had no use in such situations. Not surprisingly, when Leo of Chalcedon wrote his first letter to the emperor Alexios in 1082, he drew attention to just one such act of melting of metal: the bronze doors of the Chalkoprateia church.¹³

The matter of icons

Yet, do the surviving documents on the affair of Leo of Chalcedon discuss the medium of icons? The *semeioma* (record) of Alexios I Komnenos, produced at the final council of Blachernai of 1094/95, first narrowly defined the icon as the visible likeness imparted in matter. As such, the word 'icon' was restricted to designate only the visible form, not the pairing of form and substance. And so, the matter of icons became disposable, without immunity; a material that could easily be employed for secular functions:

And again the emperor asked: 'What do you call an icon: the iconic matter or the likenesses made visible in it?' And every one responded: 'The likenesses made visible in it'. And again he asked: 'Is it possible for the likeness of Christ, which we see in the matter, to receive adorational veneration (*latreutike proskynesis*)?' And they said: 'No!' And the emperor said: 'What you have just said is the truth.' Then the bishop of Klaudiopolis said: 'Some say that the icons do not partake in divine grace.' The emperor, together with everyone else, responded: 'Anathema to the one who says that, for the icons partake in divine grace, yet they are not of the same substance as their prototypes.' [. . .] The emperor asked: 'The likeness of Christ represented (*graphomenon*) in matter: is this his divine nature?' Every one responded: 'No, for divine nature is beyond representation (*aperigraptos*)'.¹⁴

In all of these questions and responses the form is consistently separated from matter. This form constitutes the icon. Devoid of matter and divinity, it is a mere vehicle, making visible the appearances of Christ, the Virgin and the saints.

Alexios named many different media for icons: 'icons, consecrated through the sign (*typos*) of the cross, [icons] made of colors (*chromata*), tesserae (*psiphides*), or having any other suitable substance [kept] in the holy churches of the Lord, on the holy reliquaries, or clothes, on the walls, and on tablets, in houses or on the roads.'¹⁵ 'Colours, tesserae, or some other substance' encompass a spectrum of possible media. Yet, interestingly, metal is not

¹³ Leo's letter to Alexios, 1082, in Lavriotes, 'Ιστορικόν ζήτημα', 403–4.

¹⁴ *Semeioma* of Alexios I Komnenos, council of Blachernai 1094/95; PG 127, cols 971–84, esp. col. 981A.

¹⁵ *Semeioma* of emperor Alexios I Komnenos, council of Blachernai 1094/95, PG 127, col. 980 B.

stressed in this imperial definition. Since Alexios availed himself precisely of precious metals during his three requisition campaigns, one wonders whether this omission was intentional.

Yet even if his *semeioma* does not privilege metal, the documents of his supporters list metal first in the string of possible media. In the treatise of Eustratios, bishop of Nicaea, written ca. 1111, we encounter a close identification of icon with metal relief surfaces:¹⁶

If this is the thing that is being worshipped (*latreuomenon*), namely, the thing being imprinted in the imagination or in memory, or if you want, also in the faculty of reasoning and in the mind, then the previous things will come back again, we will first arrive at the surface (*diastemasin*), worshipping (*latreuontes*) the form (*schemati*), for the latter differs from the former only in its underlying (*hypokeimeno*) substance. For the former [the *diastemata*/surfaces] are imprinted (*enetypto*) in gold, or silver, or colours (*chromata*), while the latter are imprinted on the imagination, or in memory, or in the mind, and whereas we ought to worship (*latreuein*) the one incomprehensible God alone, who is truly beyond all materiality (*hyperousio*), yet gives being to all things, we [end up] worshipping (*latreuomen*) the manifold things, which lie in the material substratum (*hypokeimeno ousi*).¹⁷

One could only contemplate the divine by perceiving and recording first the phenomenal, exterior world. The icon is understood just as one such surface, which has received the imprint of Christ's exterior characteristics. The icon is a *diastema*, an interval, 'the space between two fingers', or a paradoxical absence manifested in matter. Yet, the iconic substance is primarily understood as metal; in other words, gold and silver.¹⁸

The same identification of iconic matter with metal reappears in Eustratios's denouncement of Leo's belief in the *theohypostatos character* of the icon of Christ:

Still [Leo of Chalcedon] maintains that it is the *character*, or the imprint left on matter by God the Logos, which those who see it say that they adore. But we would say that this is not the icon, but the prototype itself. A *theohypostatos character* is not that which is imprinted in gold, or silver, or copper, or in colours, incised (*charattomenos*) according to some artistic technique, or imprinted in our imagination or intelligence, but it is the one *character*, which upholds the divine as indivisible and without confusion, in hypostasis and in natures.¹⁹

According to Eustratios, the icon is the imprint of absence (Christ's visible characteristics) on predominantly metal surfaces, a statement fully in accord

¹⁶ Eustratios, *Treatise*, ed. Demetrakopoulos, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 127–60.

¹⁷ Eustratios, *Treatise*, ed. Demetrakopoulos, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 156.

¹⁸ *Chroma* is the third iconic substance, which I will discuss later in this chapter on pp. 269–70. Its primary meaning is related to the colour of the surfaces, rather than to pigments or the medium of painting.

¹⁹ Eustratios, *Treatise*, ed. Demetrakopoulos, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, 158.

with the iconophile image theory of the early ninth century.²⁰ In addition to the words 'gold', 'silver' and 'copper', the verb χαράττω means 'to incise, engrave, or imprint', thus strengthening the association of image making with the medium of metal. Eustratios then continues that this artificial, fashioned surface is perishable and changing, capturing a chameleonic presence that resonates with the effect of glittering metal surfaces:

I wonder if they understand how illogical their statements are vis-à-vis the sayings of the Church Fathers, that the icon and the prototype do not have two hypostases. For we know that the hypostasis is one, as the representer (*grapheus*), or any other human being, makes this representation, the artistic makers (*poietai hoi technitai*) will hence first go to the prototype of these things which they represent and they will imitate it by other means. And in this way, [the icon] is a material manifestation (*proslomma*) of the divine and the incorruptible. Not only this, but [it is] a transient thing (*rheuston*), liable to external influences (*patheton*) and a perishable (*phtharton*) surface in front of the one who happens to be there. For [otherwise] would not the artists be gods, making gods for us? Could there be anything more laughable?²¹

Eustratios describes the process of icon making as the mimetic simulation of presence through artistic means. The resulting surface is like an exterior garment – glistening, changing, moving and perishable, but affecting its audience with its shifting spectacle.²² But this moving spectacle is a simulation; presence does not reside in the icon, for the imprinted *character* is just the appearance, not the substance of the prototype.

A similar association of the medium of icons with metal appears in the letter of Basil of Euchaïta, written in 1093 to the sebastokrator, Isaac Komnenos.²³ Basil initially took the side of Leo, but then quickly switched to the side of the imperial party. Yet in this letter, Basil cautioned the imperial family about the possibility of applying an existing ecclesiastical defence against the requisition and selling of manuscripts to the case of icons. He starts with Canon 68 of the council of Trullo, 691–92 CE. Parchment and ink, by virtue of carrying the divine word, were considered consecrated, thus making books holy (*sebasmoi*). So he asks the question, could we apply the same idea to the icons of Christ, the Virgin and the saints? How is it that we give relative honour to the icon one day and on the next day, we destroy it? Could we equate the iconic matter (*eikonike hyle*) to the divine image and argue that whoever destroys the matter destroys Christ? In the past, the iconoclasts accused the iconophiles of being

²⁰ On the non-essentialist Byzantine image theory, see C. Barber, *Figure and Likeness: On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Princeton, 2002), 70–81; Pentcheva, 'The performative icon', 630–58; Pentcheva, 'Painting or relief: the ideal icon in iconophile writing in Byzantium', *Zograf* 31 (2006–2007), 7–13.

²¹ Eustratios, *Treatise*, ed. Demetrakopoulos, *Ἐκκλησιαστική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 158.

²² For further discussion of this Byzantine perception of the icons, see Pentcheva, 'The performative icon', 630–58.

²³ Basil of Euchaïta, Letter to Isaac the sebastokrator in 1093/94, ed. Lavriotes, *Ἱστορικόν ζήτημα*, 411–13.

the ones who venerated matter. But to that accusation, Theodore of Stoudios responded that the iconophiles did not venerate the material; rather, they venerated the icons in a relative fashion. He declared that iconophiles do not show worship to matter, for they do not have an adorational veneration (*latreutike proskynesis*) towards icons. Basil continues:

For the colour remains a colour and matter is perishable if the divine form is not imparted to it. No one who has power over logic would venerate it or give it any sort of honour at all. Nor indeed would someone who marches against the enemies and accusers of Christians say that he offers worship to matter. As iconic matter, we might show impertinence to destroy these material substances in the divine icons, but as *typoi* saving [the *character*] of Christ, the Virgin and saints, we would honour them, for the honour passes on to the prototype. But in the case of those who venerate holy icons, if they destroy the thing they kiss, or are willing to give [these icons] over to be melted for casting, I do not know if [their act] of selling the divine glory after kissing [the icon] does not resemble the betrayal of Christ [a reference to Judas]. Back then, having kissed the prototype [Christ himself], [Judas] subjected him to death, having sold that original [Christ], who is beyond any [monetary] value. If we would like to be in the fellowship of Judas, then we can melt the human form of Christ imparted in the icons without hesitation.²⁴

The expressions 'to give over to melting' (*apodidosthai eis choneian*), as well as 'to smash' and 'smashing' (*syntribo, syntribe*), link the icons with metal production. Such melting and destruction is then compared to Judas's betrayal in selling Christ for forty pieces of silver. The word used, 'silver' (*argyros*), strengthens the perception of the iconic medium as metal.

Basil also uses the word 'colour' (*chroma*). But does he mean painting when he uses this word? In fact *chroma* refers to the surface, which is visible and received by the eyes.²⁵ As such, colour is the exterior layer on objects; it is not the definition of a medium. In the tenth-century encyclopedia, the *Suida*, we read:

Chroma: whenever the crystalline lens of the eye is coloured by the agency of certain affection, it seems to us that the air and the other visible things have been coloured with the same colour. *Chroma* is what is visible in nature itself. [Aristotle] says that the surface is that which is visible in itself. The surface is visible by itself, although not in such a way, as that [the surface] is by itself defined by the outer boundary. [. . .] Now, it is not thus that he says that surface is visible by itself, but only insofar as it contains in itself the cause of being visible. And this is colour, for the colour existing on the surface is what is visible, and sight perceives it [. . .].

On the depth of colour: for even though it seems to us that we see the transparent volume of stones, we are deceived with regard to our sight. For sight, or [rather] the energies of colours, because they are transparent,

²⁴ Basil of Euchaita, Letter to Isaac the Sebastokrator in Lavriotes, 'Ἰστορικόν ζήτημα', 413.

²⁵ L. James, *Light and Colour in Byzantine Art* (Oxford, 1996), 74–5; *eadem*, 'Colour and meaning in Byzantium', *JCS* 11/2 (2003), 223–33.

pass through the volume of stones. And we perceive the stones through the colour existing on their surface, believing this to be the depth of colour.²⁶

Chroma is the quality of the exterior, visible surface. It is the matter or substance of things, material, perishable and changeable: it resonates with the definition given by Eustratios regarding the fashioned texture of icons. It is this surface that is perceived by the eye. Thus for the Byzantines, *chroma* as surface did not designate any specific medium of artistic production but could be applied to any artistically fashioned texture: enamel, mosaics, painting, gilded or nielloed metal surfaces. It is the surface, which changes in appearance with shifts in ambient light.

If we now return to the texts describing the miraculous icons of the Theotokos in Constantinople in the eleventh century, we encounter a surprisingly similar equation of these charismatic images with metal reliefs. In the *Maria Romaia* text of the third quarter of the eleventh century (Paris, BN, gr. 1474, fols 237v–247r), the first description of the icon states:

The marvelous gleaming (*thaumasia marmaryge*) of her face, and the shape (*morphe*) of her icon, flashing with the bright beam of light (*te tou photos lampadouchia exastraptousa*), enlightens the souls of many faithful, while it burns to ashes (*kataphlegei*) the sight of the unfaithful.²⁷

A series of words conveying aspects of light are employed to describe the appearance of the icon: it has the gleaming sheen of marble, the flashing, radiant surface of metal and the flicker of the fiery tongues of torches. This one-sentence description creates a whole spectacle of marble-revetted spaces, shimmering metal surfaces, and faithful worshippers carrying oil-lamps and torches. The poetic assembly of images offers a perfect introduction to a text that commemorates the miracles and rituals in honour of the charismatic icon. The description, like the icon itself, is performative and affective, generating sensual stimuli that trigger somatic apprehension in the faithful.²⁸

The text then continues with the miraculous appearance of the original. When the apostles Philip and Peter were in the city of Diospolis, they prayed to the Virgin and asked her to appear before them in the church which had been newly built for her:

And when the apostle had completed his prayer, forthwith the icon materialised on the immaculate marble of the holy sanctuary, having a height of three *pecheis*, [it appeared] as if it was masterfully fashioned by

²⁶ A. Adler, ed., *Suidae Lexicon*, Lexicographi Graeci 1 (4 vols, Leipzig, 1928–38, repr. 1971), vol. 4, 828–9. The translation is taken from <http://www.stoa.org/>, but edited by the author.

²⁷ 'Maria Romaia', Sect. 1, ed. E. von Dobschütz, 'Maria Romaia. Zwei unbekanntere Texte', *BZ* 12 (1903), 173–214, esp. 193.

²⁸ On the Byzantine concept of animation, seen as changing appearances of surfaces caused by fleeting phenomenal shadows and highlights, see Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, chapter 5, and *eadem*, 'Moving eyes: surface and shadow in the Byzantine mixed-media relief icon', *Res. Anthropology and Aesthetics* 53 (2009), 222–34.

the hands of the craftsman of life-like images (*zographos*) – the purple, her entire dress, her hands, the shape of her face, and finally the delineation of her eyes, and how she carried in her all-blameless arms the pre-eternal God as her son.²⁹

The icon miraculously emerged on the surface of the marble, looking like an object fashioned by the hand of a craftsman.

A few centuries later, the emperor Julian attempted to destroy this *acheiropoietos*. He sent stonemasons (*lithoxooi*) to hack it down. But his endeavour was divinely curtailed.³⁰ Both the making and unmaking of the icon present it as a work associated with the activities of carvers and sculptors, not with painters or the medium of painting.

In the next stage of the story, the patriarch Germanos (715–30), who desired to make a copy of this *acheiropoietos* image for Constantinople, sent a craftsman (*zographos*) to do it:

With the artistry of a craftsman of life-like images (*zographos*), the beauty of her likeness (*emphereia*) was modeled through the craft of colours in a tablet, having represented indistinguishably from the original how she carries our Lord, Jesus Christ and God in her all-blameless arms.

In the past, English-speaking authors have always translated the word *zographos* as ‘painter’. But this term is vague with regard to medium, and the constant reference to sculptors and carvers in the preceding passages concerning the *acheiropoietos* original suggests that a much wider group of professions are encompassed by *zographos*; a variety that includes people working with enamel and mosaic work. Moreover, in the majority of other manuscripts transmitting the same story, a variant reading of the same section mentions mosaic tesserae (*eikona en sanidi (sanisi) psephisi kekosmemene*).³¹ I would suggest that ‘colours’ refers to the variegated hues of the surface, not to the medium.

Similarly, in a Latin description of Constantinople of the last quarter of the eleventh century (transmitted in a manuscript from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, Tarragona, Bibliotheca Publica, Lat. 55), some of the miraculous icons of the Theotokos are described as made of gold.³² The thaumaturgic image of the ‘usual miracle’ in the rotunda of the Blachernai is referred to as a ‘golden icon’ (*ycona aurea*).³³ A second miraculous icon

²⁹ ‘Maria Romaia’, Sect. 5, von Dobschütz, ed., ‘Maria Romaia’, 194.

³⁰ ‘Maria Romaia’, Sect. 8, von Dobschütz, ed., ‘Maria Romaia’, 195.

³¹ ‘Maria Romaia’, Sect. 9, von Dobschütz, ed., ‘Maria Romaia’, 196.

³² K. Ciggaar, ‘Une description de Constantinople dans le Tarragonensis 55’, *REB* 53 (1995), 117–40. At the same time, other icons of the Virgin (behind the altar and at the main gates of Hagia Sophia, and the Hodegetria itself) are either not described in terms of medium, or are referred to generically as ‘imagines pictae’, Tarragonensis 55, v. 257, 350; see Ciggaar, ‘Une description’, 125, 127.

³³ ‘In hac parva est Dei genetricis sancta et venerabilis ycona aurea, gestantis filium quem benedicta genuit. De hac sancta ycona omni septimana gloriosum fit miraculum’, Tarragonensis 55, vv. 105–7; Ciggaar, ‘Une description’, 121. Already at

at the basilica of the Blachernai is an *acheiropoietos*, which has reified itself in marble.³⁴ Finally, the icons that follow the Hodegetria in the train of her Tuesday procession are presented as ‘sacred golden images’ (*ymagines sanctae aureae*).³⁵ These metal icons offered an ideal spectacle of surfaces constantly changing under the shift of ambient light. So how did the performance of metal icons affect the faithful?

Spectacle and imagination

According to the highbrow theory imposed on the Byzantine viewers, these Middle Byzantine icons just held in matter the imprint of the *character* of Christ, the Virgin and the saints. Their substance, however, differed from the nature of prototypes displayed – something consistently reaffirmed by the Komnenian imperial defenders of orthodox image theory. So, in fact the icons paradoxically presented absence reified in matter. Yet, by being predominantly fashioned in metal, these panels had a metallic, changing surface, which presented the fleeting, temporal and phenomenal. The metal icon thus offered a visualisation of the process of seeing and contemplation, of a move from the phenomenal to the numenal.

Eustratios of Nicaea explains in his treatise how the icon is just a relief surface, presenting an animated spectacle of the temporal, affective and perishable. It is these changes that attract the senses. Sight carries and imprints on the imagination this information of the fleeting effects gathered by the entire *sensorium*. These ghost impressions stay in the imagination only long enough to be recorded in memory. Once stored in memory, this record of imprints could stimulate the mind to contemplate what is beyond the temporal, material and perishable:

the start of the text, the anonymous Latin pilgrim marvels at the immense amount of gold and silver in Constantinople.

³⁴ ‘Est in eadem gloriosa Dei genetricis basilica quedam ammirabilis ipsius imago que Greco eloquio ycona dicitur. Quo denim Latini dicunt imaginem Greci vocant yconiam. Hec ergo Dei genetricis ycona marmorea non manufacta est sed nutu divino operata in maxim out dignum est habetur honore. Nam pendent ante illam assidue .iiii. lampades auree non sine lumine. Ispa vero Dei genetricis sancta ymago non est picta coloribus manu artifices, non sculpta artificio humano, sed effigiata est Dei virtute in marmore cum filio quem genuit beata virgo.’ Tarragonensis 55, vv. 135–43; Ciggaar, ‘Une description’, 122. The competition between the Blachernai and the Chalkoprateia also expressed itself in the rivalry of possessing an *acheiropoietos* of the Virgin. For the Blachernai, this was the *acheiropoietos* in marble; for the Chalkoprateia, the Maria Romaia, the copy of the famous marble *acheiropoietos* image in Lydda/Diospolis. We know that the Paris manuscript, BN gr. 1474, which transmits this narrative, came from the library of the Chalkoprateia: see von Dobschütz, ‘Maria Romaia’, 186, 213.

³⁵ ‘Percedunt vero hac nobilem Dei genetricis ymaginem alie quam plurime ex aliis ecclesiis ymagines sanctae aureequasi dominam famule’, Tarragonensis 55, vv. 361–3; Ciggaar, ‘Une description’, 127.

We say about this that the one who casts his gaze on the icon forthwith transcends sensual apprehension (*aistheseos*) and, when apart from it, carries around in himself the shape (*diaplasin*) of the image (*eidōs*) and its subsequent imprint (*diatyposin*). In this he has done nothing other than to imprint in his imagination (*phantasia*) the surfaces (*diastemmata*) [that are visible] of the material object and the composition (*synthesin*) of its shape (*schematiseos*); this very [process] happens always to occur in every human sensory perception. The spirit (*pneuma*) of the sensory perception compartment (*aisthetikon*), whose place is the frontal cavity of the brain, holds the imprints (*typous*) of the things perceived through the sensory organs; it holds these in itself, whence sensations are called ghosts (*phantasmata ta aisthemata*), and if these abide for a sufficient time, we call them 'memory' and 'remembering'. It is also called imagination (*phantasia*), on account of being a state (*stasis*) of things that have 'appeared' to us [*phananton + stasis = phantasia*], while 'memory', as the 'abiding' (*mone*) and 'permanence' (*monimotes: mone + monimotes = mneme*) of the things that have been recognised, is the unique and steadfast [quality] of knowledge. For the sensorially perceived things, that is, the appearances (*phenomena*), impress themselves first on the spirit (*pneuma*) in the frontal cavity of the brain. From there they are conveyed to the middle [cavity]; in the place, some say, where the reasoning faculty (*logistikōn*) is established, through which [they are sent] to the faculty of memory (*mnemoneutikōn*), which has its organ at the back cavity of the brain, where the spirit (*pneuma*) of the cerebellum rests. There are some, however, who have assigned the middle cavity to the faculty of memory, placing the *aisthetikon* and the *logistikōn* in the other two cavities. Each [sector of the brain], receives its proper things: namely, the former [*aisthetikon*] receives the sensory things, while the latter [*logistikōn*] receives the conceptual things; they situate it as some kind of guard placed in the centre [i.e. the *mnemoneutikōn*].

If this is the thing that is being worshipped (*latreuomenon*), namely, the thing being imprinted in the imagination or in memory – or if you will, also in the faculty of reasoning and in the mind – then the previous things will come back again; we will first arrive at the surfaces (*diastemasin*), as we worship (*latreuontes*) the form (*schemati*), for the latter differs from the former only in its underlying (*hypokeimeno*) substance. For the former [the surfaces] are imprinted (*enetyptō*) in gold, or silver, or colours (*chromata*), while the latter are imprinted on the imagination, or in memory, or in the mind; and whereas we ought to worship (*latreuēin*) the one incomprehensible God alone, who is truly beyond all materiality (*hyperousio*) yet gives being to all things, we [end up] worshipping (*latreuomen*) the manifold things, which lie in the material substratum (*hypokeimeno ousi*).³⁶

This presentation of the workings of the brain in the perception of images is an important find for the study of Byzantine aesthetics and image theory. It offers the Byzantine counterpoint to the much better known thirteenth-century Latin discussion of Aristotelian perception of the senses and the workings of brain, received in the West through Islamic sources such as Averroes.³⁷ Eustratios's treatise shows Byzantine engagement with Aristotle, which predates the thirteenth-century Western surge in interest.

³⁶ Eustratios, *Treatise*, ed. Demetrakopoulos, *Εκκλησιαστική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 155–7.

³⁷ M. Camille, 'Before the gaze: the internal senses and late medieval practices of

According to Eustratios, our senses receive the imprint of the external, superficial, phenomenal and temporal things. They leave fleeting ghost imprints on our imagination, which disappear after they are recorded in memory. If the icon is 'absence', and we only receive the imprint of this imparted absence, it is solely in memory that we may contemplate the Lord. This is the only steadfast place of knowledge. So when we contemplate God, we contemplate him internally, in the recorded memory.

Metal icons seem to have a prominent place in the Constantinopolitan cult in the eleventh century. Their mixed-media surfaces changed with the shifts of ambient light and air. The viewer, seeing this phenomenal *poikilia*, experienced the icon as animate. The question arises, could the average Byzantine viewer of *ymagines sanctae aureae* separate the spectacle of the icon created by its changing, shimmering, metallic surfaces from the actual presence of God, which is beyond the senses?

As a result of their sensual spectacle, Byzantine icons in metal and mixed media gave the deceptive sensation of presence. It is not surprising to detect such interactive, 'living' (*empsychos*) icons in the miniatures depicting prayers to icons of Christ in the Theodore Psalter, illustrated in 1066 (London, B.L. Ms. Gr. Add. 19.352). These images frequently show Christ reaching out, his blessing and speaking hand extending beyond the gem-rimmed circumference of his golden icon.³⁸ The miniatures offer a record of the eleventh-century reception of icons as animate, a perception stemming from the exteriorisation of the internal process of imagination in the fleeting spectacle of the material icon.

The icon as presence

This exteriorised process of imagination leads to the perception of the icon as presence. Leo of Chalcedon, who openly professed this belief, offers an example of a rather common practice. Many years after the end of the affair, Eustratios of Nicaea wrote a dialogue of two protagonists, including 'the one who loves to follow custom' (*philosynethes*) and the 'the one who loves truth' (*philaletes*). The former exemplified Leo and his party, while the latter represented the emperor and orthodoxy. While the *philosynethes* believed in the icon as presence, the *philaletes* conscientiously demolished this argument, showing how the icon was only a record of form, separate from the nature of divine and sacred beings. The dialogue gives us an insight into the split between rational image theory and common icon perception in Byzantium.

seeing', in R. Nelson, ed., *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw* (Cambridge, 2000), 169–96.

³⁸ London, B.L. Ms. Gr. Add. 19.352, fols 7v, 12v, 14, 14v, 15v, 20v, 22, 26v, 32v, 34v, 38v, 42v, 44, 45, 51, 67v, 88v, 96v, 97, 98, 125v, 158, 164, 170v, 193, 199v. See C. Barber, *Theodore Psalter. Electronic Facsimile* (Champaign IL and London, 2000); J. Anderson, 'On the nature of the Theodore Psalter', *The Art Bulletin* 70/4 (1988), 550–68; S. Der Nersessian, *L'illustration des Psautiers grecs du moyen âge, II. Londres Add. 19.352*, Bibliothèque des cahiers archéologiques 1.5 (Paris, 1970).

Leo of Chalcedon offers us access into this world of common perception. How did he build his argument about the icon as presence? The letter that he wrote in 1093/94 to Nicholas, bishop of Adrianopolis, articulated his theory of icons. At the beginning, Leo vented his anger against Basil of Euchaïta, despite his recent letter in support of Leo's views. Leo misinterpreted his writings, for he was still upset by Basil having called him a 'worshipper of matter':

For he [Basil, who by 1093 had joined the imperial party and thus become an enemy of Leo,] formerly called us 'worshippers of matter' (*hylolatras*), we who show veneration towards the holy icons, not towards their iconic matter (*eikonike hyle*), but to the divinely hypostatic, corporeal character (*theohypostatou somatikon charactera*) of Christ our Lord and God that is represented in them; and together with the veneration of this, we honour the Father and the Holy Spirit. [Basil] calls this exceedingly holy *character* of Christ 'matter' (*hyle*)!³⁹

According to Leo, the icon of Christ possesses his divinely hypostatic character, that is, the divine form that is imprinted in matter. This form requires adoration and justifies the perception of the icon of Christ as containing the presence of Christ.

As mentioned earlier, Leo's model is based on the example of the mandylion and the tenth-century *troparion* using the term '*theohypostatos character*'. With the condemnation of Leo as a heretic, the *troparion* also disappeared from the Byzantine liturgical record.⁴⁰ For this phrase had enabled Leo to argue that the icon of Christ received Christ's imprint, which was the imprint of presence. In this way, divine energy was transmitted into the icon, imbuing matter with presence and transforming the imprint into a relic. It is this mandylion-centred explanation of the icon that divorces this object from referentiality and dependence on the Word (*Logos*). The icon is no longer homonymous with Christ, participating in his identity only through a shared name or inscription (as Alexios argued in his *semeioma* of 1095), but rather, the icon is 'Christ'.

When it comes to the iconic matter, Leo defined it as substance dedicated to God and as consecrated:

For the iconic matter is always matter dedicated to God, as a votive gift (*anathema*); for Christ is always God, who is contemplated through the mind yet is circumscribed by means of matter.⁴¹

Yet Leo distinguished between the iconic matter of the icons of Christ versus the iconic matter of icons of the Virgin, angels and saints. For the icons of the latter, their iconic matter (*eikonike hyle*) has not received the imprint of a *theohypostatos character*; therefore, they do not possess divine presence. Yet, as

³⁹ Leo of Chalcedon, Letter to Nicholas, bishop of Adrianopolis, 1093/94, ed. Lavriotes, 'Ιστορικό ζήτημα', 414.

⁴⁰ Grumel, 'Léon de Chalcédoine et le canon de la Fête du Saint Mandylion', *AnalBoll* 68 (1950), 135–52.

⁴¹ Leo, Letter to Nicholas, ed. Lavriotes, 'Ιστορικό ζήτημα', 414 and 446.

consecrated material, their iconic matter cannot be alienated, desecrated or expropriated for secular use. It is this matter that is brought by the faithful as gifts to God. Leo called it 'offering' (*anathema*). Gold, silver, copper and precious stones are the matter which forms the gift; the latter in turn should receive 'relative' veneration.

Both *character* and iconic matter are bound together in the definition of the icon. For this reason, Leo opposed the traditional understanding expounded by the imperial party that the icon is simply the imprint (*typos*) of the visible characteristics of Christ, the Virgin and the saints in matter:

An icon is said, in the case of Christ, the Virgin, the venerable angels, all saints and holy men, to be both: that is, the matter and the *character* imparted to them. The *hypostaseis* imparted to the icons of all the others [Virgin, angels and saints] is to be venerated relatively and honourably, and to be kissed ...⁴²

Leo defined the icon as the pairing of the imprinted *character* and the material to which it is imparted. The iconic matter (*eikonike hyle*) received relative veneration, while the *theohypostatos character* of Christ exacted adorational veneration:

The iconic matter is to be venerated honourably and relatively; that is to say through its relationship to the *theohypostatos character* of Christ. Yet, as for the visible *character* in [the iconic matter], which is not through some relationship but is the thing itself, this is to be venerated adorationally (*latreutikos proskyneitai*).⁴³

By demanding adoration (*latreutike proskynesis*) for the icon of Christ, Leo expressed his belief that this object was special – an exception infused with divine presence and energy and therefore miraculous. All other icons (of Mary and the saints) lacked a *theohypostatos character*, and as such, simply required relative veneration.

Yet, the wider audience in Byzantium applied Leo's understanding of the icon of Christ to images of Mary, believing that sacred energy resided in them. The increased number of thaumaturgic Marian icons in eleventh-century Constantinople offers support for this conclusion.⁴⁴ The narrative of the 'Maria Romaia' offers further proof to that end. Here, past events are told from an eleventh-century perspective of icons. According to this narrative, Germanos, before being exiled from Constantinople by the iconoclasts, wrote a prayer on a tablet (*pittakion*) and attached it to the frame of the Maria Romaia icon. Then he kissed and sent it off in the waters of the Bosphoros. The icon sailed upright in the sea all the way to Rome. Here it was met by the pope, Gregory, and escorted with hymns and incense to the basilica of St Peter.⁴⁵

⁴² Leo, Letter to Nicholas, ed. Lavriotes, 'Ιστορικών ζήτημα', 415 and 446.

⁴³ Leo, Letter to Nicholas, ed. Lavriotes, 'Ιστορικών ζήτημα', 415 and 446.

⁴⁴ Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*.

⁴⁵ 'Maria Romaia', Sects 10–11, in von Dobschütz, ed., 'Maria Romaia', 196–7.

When a Byzantine iconoclast dignitary, who was sent on a mission to the Latin West, arrived in Rome, he went to St Peter's and assaulted the Maria Romaia icon with his knife. The icon immediately spurted blood; thus, Mary was perceived to be present in her icon. This episode reveals how widespread such a notion was in Byzantium in the late eleventh century. Just like Leo's concept of the icon of Christ possessing the *theohypostatos character*, so too the icon of the Romaia reveals Mary's presence, which had been imparted to the fashioned matter:

Seething with anger while looking at the uncovered divine character of the icon, the wretch [. . .] angrily hit the right cheek a little lower than the eyelash. And immediately a miracle happened, a thing beyond all reason, for a stream of blood pouring out of the stabbed cheek, coming down all the way to her chest flew out, as if when the right side was stabbed with a knife, the venerated iconic breastplate (*proskyneton peristernion*), reified in the flesh and [Mary, who] suffered in her own icon, spoke explicitly as the Mother of God, and convicted the ungodly boldness of the impious.⁴⁶

The dramatic stabbing of the icon serves as a proof of the physical presence of the Virgin in the material substance of the image. The venerable iconic breastplate – an artistically fashioned material object – becomes the real, heaving chest of Mary, soaked in the flood of spurting blood. While for Leo of Chalcedon this belief was valid only for the mandylion; for the wider Byzantine audience, it was indiscriminately applied to the icons of the Theotokos, heavily adorned and set to perform. The fleeting phenomenal effects enhanced in the display of Constantinopolitan metal icons created a parallel, exteriorised example of the widespread Aristotelian understanding of how sight imprints fleeting ghost images in the imagination (*phantasia*). Yet, it is this very performance of the *ymagines sanctae aureae* that then demolished the orthodox tenet of the icon as 'absence' and persuaded the faithful to perceive these panels as animate or *empsychai*.

⁴⁶ 'Maria Romaia', Sects 12 and 13; von Dobschütz, ed., 'Maria Romaia', 198–9.

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Conclusion

Not the Theotokos Again?

Margaret Mullett

In the Byzantine tragedy *Christos Paschon*, the Virgin stands centre stage, like the Virgin in the apse at Torcello, though surrounded by a *choros* of Galilaean women rather than by apostles, and waits for messengers, *angeloï*, to bring her news. What they bring is a text which calls itself 'a dramatic hypothesis in the manner of Euripides' and comprises 2,610 iambic lines on the subject of the Passion of Christ. It is a tissue of lines and part-lines from, in order, *Medea*, *Hippolytos*, *Rhesos* and the *Bacchae*, plus rather fewer from *Hecuba*, *Orestes* and the *Troades*; there are some quotations from *Prometheus Bound* and from the *Agamemnon*. But the vast majority of the text is drawn from the four plays, and the vast majority is spoken by the Theotokos, its protagonist.¹ It has been studied by scholars trying to prove the existence or otherwise of a Byzantine drama: by Margaret Alexiou, looking at the lament of the Virgin, and recently by Elizabeth Bolman on the breastfeeding Virgin, the Galaktotrophousa,² but it has not yet been used to discuss the Byzantine view of the Theotokos in context.

Similarly, the Virgin has been centre stage in Byzantinist discourse for the past ten years, from the Mother of God exhibition and its conference, planned

¹ *Christos Paschon*, ed. A. Tuilier, *La passion du Christ: tragédie. Grégoire de Nazianze. Introd., texte critique., traduction, notes et index*, SC 149 (Paris, 1969). Since H. Hunger, 'Die byzantinische Literatur der Komnenenzeit', *Anzeiger der philologisch-historischen Klasse der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 105, n. 3 (1968), 63–5, the text has been redated to the twelfth century, but rigorous work on dating and attribution, following ground-breaking work by Hörandner, is overdue. See W. Hörandner, 'Lexikalische Beobachtungen zum Christos Paschon', in E. Trapp et al., *Studien zur byzantinischen Lexikographie* (Vienna, 1988), 183–202.

² P. Marciniak, *Greek Drama in Byzantine Times* (Katowice, 2004), 89–95; M. Alexiou, 'The lament of the Virgin in Byzantine literature and Modern Greek folk-song', *BMGS* 1 (1975), 111–40 at 122–4; Elizabeth Bolman quoted from the paper delivered at the conference that generated this volume. See also A.P. Kazhdan and A.W. Epstein, *Change in Byzantine culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 7 (Berkeley CA, 1985), 140–1.

and published³ by Maria Vassilaki, 2000–2001,⁴ through the ambitious scope of the Ecclesiastical History Society's summer and winter conferences 2001–2002, published as *Studies in Church History* 39,⁵ several important books by Shoemaker, Daley and Peltomaa, now joined by Jane Baun's engaging *Tales from another Byzantium*,⁶ and projects in Australia and Vienna as well as in Birmingham, all duly noted by Averil Cameron in her introduction to this volume. Even before this decade there was interest and something rather different from Roman Catholic Mariology: influential studies by Annemarie Weyl Carr, Nancy Ševčenko and Ioli Kalavrezou,⁷ and – which is never said in the introductions of these recent collaborative volumes since they are usually written by her – the highly important essays of Averil Cameron, written in the late 1970s.⁸ With all of these *angeli* reaching the stage, it is easy to sympathise with the view of a very distinguished Byzantinist who sent his good wishes to the conference with the words 'not the Theotokos again?'

The story so far

But on the eve of the conference that generated this volume, which was part of a larger AHRC-funded project at the University of Birmingham, those who were most concerned with the Theotokos were very much aware of what was still not known. The Mother of God exhibition brought together

³ M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Milan and Athens, 2000).

⁴ M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005).

⁵ R.N. Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, *Studies in Church History* 39 (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester NY, 2004).

⁶ B.E. Daley, S.J., *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood NY, 1998); L.M. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin in the Akathistos Hymn* (Leiden, 2001); S. Shoemaker, *The Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford, 2003); B.V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park PA, 2006); J. Baun, *Tales from Another Byzantium. Celestial Journey and Local Community in the Medieval Greek Apocrypha* (Cambridge, 2007); M.B. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven: Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood NY, 2008).

⁷ I. Kalavrezou, 'Images of the mother: when the Virgin Mary became *Meter Theou*', *DOP* 44 (1990), 165–72; N. Ševčenko, 'Icons in the liturgy', *DOP* 45 (1991), 45–57; *eadem*, 'Servants of the holy icon' in C. Moss and K. Kiefer, eds, *Byzantine East, Latin West. Art Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann* (Princeton NJ, 1995), 547–53; A. Weyl Carr, 'Threads of authority: the Virgin Mary's veil in the Middle Ages', in S. Gordon, ed., *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture* (New York and Basingstoke, 2001), 59–94.

⁸ A. Cameron, 'The Theotokos in sixth-century Constantinople: a city finds its symbol', *JTS*, n.s. 29 (1978), 79–108; *eadem*, 'The Virgin's robe: an episode in the history of early seventh-century Constantinople', *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 42–56; *eadem*, 'Images of authority: élites and icons in late sixth-century Constantinople', *Past and Present* 84 (1979), 3–35; all reprinted in *eadem*, *Continuity and Change in Sixth-Century Byzantium* (London, 1981).

an extraordinary group of objects, and the catalogue scrupulously and exhaustively studied different media and forms. But it hardly began to ask the questions which were so much alive at the conference and in the chapters now collected here: art historical questions were emerging in Vassilaki's conference and volume, but textual questions and wider questions of cult were not yet asked. Henry Mayr-Harting's presidency of the Ecclesiastical History Society brought together a remarkable range of historians from the period of the Fathers to the present day and from Portugal to Ethiopia, but the seven Byzantine papers range almost as widely and offered various insights including (a) the awareness that the cult of Mary was slow to take off and that much of what we thought was late antique Mariolatry was in fact retrofitted from after iconoclasm, or that a key text could be dated as far apart as the fifth and seventh centuries (the *Akathistos Hymn*);⁹ (b) that there is no agreement on the role of the empress Pulcheria or indeed of any Byzantine empress in the development of the cult;¹⁰ (c) that while we may be sure that Byzantine women were no more particularly concerned with the cult of the Theotokos than were Byzantine men, Armenian women of the nineteenth century were convinced that 'she was a woman and knows how to pity women like us';¹¹ and d) that 'we will never know what the iconoclasts actually believed' about Mary.¹² The first insight came to this conference in force; the second came and had an outing, but failed to shake the impressive demolition job of Liz James at Athens;¹³ the third will inform any future discussion of the Theotokos in terms of gender; and the last formed a major justification for the Birmingham project which was the reason for the conference. The conference was designed to provide context for the work of Leslie Brubaker and Mary Cunningham on the period between 600 and 900. And it did.

What we now know that we did not know before

The volume, like the conference, testifies to what Cameron calls 'the capaciousness of the Theotokos':¹⁴ all manner of Byzantinists are drawn in and have a vital part to play in building up a picture. Some are concerned

⁹ A. Cameron, 'The cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: religious development and myth-making', in Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, 1–21.

¹⁰ K. Cooper, 'Empress and Theotokos: gender and patronage in the Christological controversy', in Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, 39–51.

¹¹ J. Baun, 'Discussing Mary's humanity in medieval Byzantium', in Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, 63–72, esp. 63.

¹² M.B. Cunningham, 'The meeting of the old and the new: the typology of Mary the Theotokos in Byzantine homilies and hymns', in Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, 52–62, esp. 61.

¹³ L. James, 'The empress and the Virgin in early Byzantium', in Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God*, 145–52.

¹⁴ A. Cameron, 'Introduction: The Mother of God in Byzantium: Relics, Icons, Texts', above, 1–5.

with theology and some with iconography, but each realises the value of the other's work. Some look backwards, to the origins of the Virgin's imagery in Wisdom literature,¹⁵ some to the present day and the 2005 Anglican and Roman Catholic commission on the Virgin¹⁶ and the realisation that 'there is nothing to fear about Mary'. Some offer new evidence such as the Syriac Melkite hymns¹⁷ or a possible image of the actual veil of the Virgin, the one in the Blachernai.¹⁸ Others offer new readings of better known texts.¹⁹

But there is throughout this volume a considerable desire to arrive at a firm foundation for discussion; this has resulted in a particular concern for chronology. Rina Avner is able to assure us of the dates both of the Kathisma as the most ancient Marian *locus sanctus* in Jerusalem and its environs and of the feast of the Theotokos on 15 August, inaugurated by bishop Juvenal after his return from the first council of Ephesos, as the earliest strictly Marian feast.²⁰ Henry Maguire has teased out a sense that pre-iconoclast images were more concerned with biology and post-iconoclast images with emotions, or with Christological issues as against a real sense of the Virgin herself.²¹ Stephen Shoemaker has taken up the idea of George of Nikomedeia as a landmark in Marian lament: the importance of his homily is that it puts Mary at the centre of not just Marian events but also the whole story of the Passion and Resurrection, much like the tragic protagonist of the *Christos Paschon*. But he has shown that the landmark was not George but in fact Maximos Confessor in a *Vita* of Mary preserved only in a Georgian translation, used not only by George but also by John Geometres and Symeon Metaphrastes. And he manages to explain why the Gospel accounts do not place her at the tomb: the *myrophoroi* were much better witnesses than the devoted mother.²² We can almost begin to construct a timeline for the Byzantine Virgin.

Three major chapters on homilies – by Pauline Allen,²³ Mary Cunningham²⁴ and Niki Tsironis²⁵ – all focus on the period from the sixth to the ninth

¹⁵ M. Barker, 'Wisdom imagery and the Mother of God', above, 91–108.

¹⁶ Cameron, 'Introduction', 4; A. Louth, 'John of Damascus on the Mother of God as a link between humanity and God', 153, refers to the proclamation of the Assumption by Pius XII fifty years ago.

¹⁷ N. Smelova, 'Melkite Syriac hymns to the Mother of God (9th–11th centuries): manuscripts, language and imagery', above, 117–31.

¹⁸ H. Maguire, 'Body, clothing, metaphor: the Virgin in early Byzantine art', above, 44.

¹⁹ Louth, 'John of Damascus', 153–61.

²⁰ R. Avner, 'The initial tradition of the Theotokos at the Kathisma', above, 9–29.

²¹ Maguire, 'Body, clothing, metaphor', 50–51.

²² S. Shoemaker, 'A mother's passion: Mary at the Crucifixion and Resurrection in the earliest *Life of the Virgin* and its influence on George of Nikomedeia's Passion homilies', 65–6.

²³ P. Allen, 'Portrayals of Mary in Greek homiletic literature (6th–7th centuries)', above, 69–88.

²⁴ M.B. Cunningham, 'The use of the *Protevangelion of James* in eighth-century homilies on the Mother of God', above, 163–78.

²⁵ N. Tsironis, 'Emotion and the senses in Marian homilies of the Middle Byzantine period', above, 179–95.

century, and are concerned to show development as a means of dating. Allen's commitment to this kind of spade-work is clear from her leadership of the International Early Mariology Project; she is aware of problems, but also of possible solutions. Allen looks at homilies on the Annunciation and the Hypapante (Candlemas), the only scriptural Marian feasts. To the four major corpora, of Leontios, Severos of Antioch, Sophronios of Jerusalem and Anastasios of Sinai, she adds three homilies by Abraham of Ephesos, Hesychios of Jerusalem and Leontios of Neapolis. She then investigates developments, in terms of characterisation (the Virgin has become theologically confident by the sixth and seventh century), in terms of the way in which the scandalous difficulties in the New Testament account (purification of a Virgin birth, the sword in Symeon's prophecy) which troubled earlier theologians were airbrushed out to reveal a confident and unquestioned Virgin, and in terms of the epithets used. She looks at other kinds of writing and at domestic jewellery, and is prepared to face up to inconsistencies and exceptions: why is Sophronios's liturgical poetry not as affective as Romanos's? She notes new criticisms of Mary (the bishop of Rhosos who criticised the party-girl who demanded more wine at Cana) and urges us to watch carefully how they are diffused in later treatments. She calls for thorough-going investigation of epithets²⁶ as a vital basis for future research.

Where Allen stops, Mary Cunningham continues. She looks at the incorporation of the material in the *Protoevangelion of James* into Marian homilies of the eighth century, looking at Andrew of Crete, John of Damascus, Germanos of Constantinople, John of Euboea and Kosmas Vestitor. She sees this happening because of the introduction of new Marian feasts, and identifies Romanos as the first liturgical writer to use the apocryphal text. She is then able to connect the certainty that the feasts of the Nativity of the Mother of God, the commemoration of Joachim and Anna, the Presentation in the temple and Conception were celebrated 'widely through the Byzantine empire and Palestine' in the eighth century with the fact that all the eighth-century liturgical texts associated with these feasts draw explicitly on the *Protoevangelion*. She concludes that interest in Mary as a holy figure in her own right was gathering pace from the late sixth century onward.

Niki Tsironis looks at homilies of the iconoclastic period and suggests that it was precisely at this time that earlier Syriac concerns with the senses and emotions, tantalisingly visible in Romanos's writing, emerge in mainstream homilies. She examines Andrew of Crete, John of Euboea, Germanos of Constantinople, John of Damascus and Theodore the Stoudite, showing that iconophile authors intensify their use of sensual and emotional imagery in order to develop the consequences of Incarnational theology; she further demonstrates that the Mother of God is the vehicle for this development. This is perhaps the most literary of the chapters, in a volume which for the first time concentrates almost entirely on text; however, it also touches on

²⁶ Already called for by D.F. Wright, 'From God-bearer to Mother of God', in Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, 30.

cognitive science in order to consider what the Byzantine meant by emotions and senses. A question raised, which will be the subject for future work, is the absence of such imagery in Theodore of Stoudios (the only corpus not studied here by Cunningham). Is this a general monastic or ascetic trait? Are writers aware of holding back from using this vocabulary? The topic cries out for further research.

Two other chapters have broadened our understanding remarkably, one by transforming our view of the Constantinopolitan cult, the other by leading us into the possibilities of liturgy and explaining familiar images in a different way. Although we might have thought that Bissera Pentcheva had exhausted the topic of public and performative Marian celebration in Constantinople,²⁷ Dirk Krausmüller has added to her triad of the Blachernai, Hodegon and Pankokrator monasteries.²⁸ He looks at the role of the church of the Chalkoprateia and its relations with the Blachernai, and sees the development of the feasts of the Annunciation and the Birth of the Virgin, followed by the Presentation and Conception of the Virgin at Chalkoprateia, as part of a (largely failed) competitive attempt by patriarchal clergy and officials to promote the alternative shrine with its alternative relic of the belt. Through careful study of feasts and the sermons preached there, he is able to see a human political struggle behind the timeless truths.

Nancy Ševčenko also has the ability to make the most skilled and painstaking philological research speak vividly about the Marian devotion of communities and individuals; her argument is both intricate and convincing, leading us on a complex journey with many twists and turns.²⁹ She starts with a single hymn, a *kanon* in two manuscript versions (the Virgin mourning Christ on the cross and then dead before her), sung in the eleventh and twelfth century on Good Friday evening. She sets this firstly in a historical development which ends with the familiar *epitaphios threnos* of Holy Saturday and village *moirologia*, then in the triple cycles of daily compline, Friday compline and Good Friday compline, following the practice of the monks of the Theotokos Evergetis in their Synaxarion. There she is able to take us, after Friday compline, to the chapel of the Holy Apostles and to the monastery of the Pantokrator in order to visit the tombs in the Heroon, where she recreates for us the procession of monks and secular clergy. Ševčenko notes the decoration of the Heroon with the passion cycle and compares it to other monastic burial chambers, such as the crypt at Hosios Loukas and the burial chapel at Chrysostomos, with its extended cycle of Crucifixion, Deposition, Entombment and Anastasis. A caption here helps her to see a connection with Manuel I's appropriation of the relic of the *lithos* and other less prestigious approximations of the care of the recently dead to the labours of Joseph of Arimathea. Ševčenko's journey ends with an explanation for the strange iconography of some twelfth-century

²⁷ Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*.

²⁸ D. Krausmüller, 'Making the most of Mary: the cult of the Virgin in the Chalkoprateia from late antiquity to the tenth century', above, 219–45.

²⁹ N.P. Ševčenko, 'The service of the Virgin's lament revisited', above, 247–62.

entombment scenes, which may represent a burial procession crossing the time-barriers to join the recently bereaved in Friday compline. Hers is a less competitive world than Krausmüller's agonistic clerics, but still one where Mary's lament is put to the use of human need; this opens up whole new periods of Marian celebration and devotion.

Little by little the timeline creeps forward. Not long ago we were very unsure what lay beyond late antiquity with regard to Marian devotion; the period of iconoclasm is being illuminated, but that of the eleventh and twelfth centuries has remained very dark, apart from an awareness that emotion was being treated in a new way.³⁰ In the same period as that treated by Ševčenko, Bissera Pentcheva and Kallirroë Linardou seek to establish heresiological foundations for particular Marian phenomena.³¹ Pentcheva, moving on from her study of the Virgin on the streets of Constantinople, now looks at icons and their attractiveness to the perceiver, as seen in their gleaming sheen and sparkling glitter, as well as in their attractiveness to marauding emperors in search of metal for the defence of the empire. Pentcheva offers a highly original reading of the texts surrounding the Leo of Chalcedon affair, creating an eleventh-century icon theory against which to read accounts such as that of the Maria Romaia icon.³² Kallirroë Linardou also uses the heresiological landscape of the twelfth century to provide a justification for four full-page illustrations of typological imagery for James of Kokkinobaphos's homilies on the Virgin, apparently written for Eirene the Sebastokratorissa. Once again the Virgin provides protection against Christological error. But does this mean that the Mother of God, after attaining a more independent saintly existence from the late sixth century, is yet again reduced to a set of metaphors, to a proof of the Incarnation or the theory of the icon? Leena Mari Peltomaa's meticulous analysis of the *Akathistos Hymn* shows how metaphors can cumulatively add up to 'the official view', 'the dogma of the Theotokos'.³³

Henry Maguire offered us a prospect of a post-iconoclast Virgin who was treated for herself, rather than as theological proof, and Pauline Allen showed us already a newly confident seventh-century Virgin to whom one could not talk down. But we have seen our post-iconoclast Virgin rushing towards the revered dead of a monastic community on the one hand and being fought over by warring Constantinopolitan ecclesiastical power groups on the other, before becoming a weapon in icon-theoretical or Christological conflict. This point is taken up by two scholars who work with different kinds of texts from the liturgical and homiletic texts that we have seen so far: their

³⁰ H. Maguire, 'The depiction of sorrow in middle Byzantine art', *DOP* 31 (1977), 123–74.

³¹ B. Pentcheva, 'Miraculous icons: medium, imagination and presence', above, 263–77; K. Linardou, 'Depicting the salvation: typological images of Mary in the Kokkinobaphos manuscripts', above, 133–49.

³² *Commentarius de imagine Mariae romanae* (BHG 16–18), ed. E. Dobschuetz, 'Maria Romeia: zwei unbekannte Texte', *BZ* 12 (1903), 173–214.

³³ L.M. Peltomaa, 'Epithets of the Theotokos in the *Akathistos Hymn*', above, 109–16.

texts (apocalyptic, psychopelitic and hagiographic) might be considered 'sub-literary' since they appealed to religious sensibilities which could be dismissed as 'popular'. They are also narrative, and in these texts the Virgin is no receptive, passive symbol, but is active for both protection and vengeance. Derek Krueger looks at a Virgin who confidently guards the *limen* and thus acts as gate-keeper of cult, at once elucidating a puzzling passage in the Life of Mary of Egypt with parallel passages in John Moschos's *Spiritual Meadow* and Anthony of Choziba's *Miracles*.³⁴ These texts provide a precursor for the Virgin of 626 who refuses entrance to besieging barbarians. Jane Baun starts from the *Life of Andrew the Fool* and moves quickly to the hyperactive super-heroine of the apocalypse tradition. In a strong systematisation of modes of revelation and also modes of activity, she analyses Mary's enthusiastic championing of sinful mortals, but also highlights stories in which the Virgin and her court terrorise the faithful.³⁵ What is there to fear about Mary? A great deal in these stories, just as there is in the Theotokos of the *Christos Paschon* who voices the lines of Medea, Agave and Phaidra in her loathing of Judas.

But fear in itself does not argue for agency. Krueger's gatekeeper can easily be found in the *chairetismoi* of the Akathistos and even Baun's 'Apocalyptic Theotokos' represents 'what believers wanted Mary to do',³⁶ whether this was tender intercession or vindictive revenge against iconoclasts. 'Women are good to think with',³⁷ and the Virgin is no exception.

What we now know we don't know

So the volume has moved the subject forward in various ways, and provided a firm contextual basis for the Birmingham project. It has clarified an overall chronology, added some new texts and treatment of images, offered a more serious treatment of texts dealing with the Theotokos than any previous collection of essays, and begun to tackle seriously the issue of cult. It has not, however, contextualised the second-century apocryphal gospels.³⁸ Nor has it entirely resolved uncertainties concerning the dating of the apocalypses or

³⁴ D. Krueger, 'Mary at the threshold: the Mother of God as guardian in seventh-century Palestinian miracle accounts', above, 31–8.

³⁵ J. Baun, 'Apocalyptic *Panagia*: some byways of Marian revelation in Byzantium', above, 199–211.

³⁶ Baun, 'Apocalyptic *Panagia*', 207.

³⁷ J.L. Nelson, *The Frankish World, 750–900* (London and Rio Grande, 1996), chapter 12 ('Women and the Word in the earlier Middle Ages', 203–204), elaborates: 'Women have diverse, and opposed, meanings inscribed on them, and lend themselves to such multiple interpretations in ways that men do not.' She refers to Peter Brown's comment on 'the deeply ingrained tendency of all men in the ancient world to use women to think with'; see P.R.L. Brown, *The Body and Society* (New York, 1988), 153, and traces it back to C. Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. C. Jacobson and B. Grundfest Schoepf (Harmondsworth, 1977), 61–2. This was quoted at the conference by Leslie Brubaker.

³⁸ As called for by Averil Cameron, 'Introduction', 1–5.

indeed of the *Akathistos Hymn*. It has not solved the question of the role of Pulcheria in the fifth-century 'take-off' of the cult, though the sceptics now seem thicker on the ground than true believers. And some details of the late sixth-century developments in which 'the city found its symbol' are still under debate. Nevertheless, this volume paves the way for a clarification of the role played in Byzantines' belief, thought and action during iconoclasm and the wider period spanning 600–900, now that the homiletic evidence is firmly tied down and that translations of the remaining eighth-century Greek homilies have been published.³⁹

And new desiderata have appeared as the volume has taken shape. Some lead us out of the topic of the Theotokos. For example the dazzlingly forward-looking methodologies teased out in Pentcheva's and Tsironis's chapters will certainly lead to further work on phenomenology, light and colour in Byzantine art on the one hand, and to further work on emotion on the other, bringing together anthropologists, psychologists, psychoanalysts and philosophers, to arrive at a view of how the Byzantines understood both perception and emotion.

Other ideas take us firmly back into the study of the Theotokos, though they may require detours first. The processual model of Niki Tsironis, in which new ideas appear first in poetry, then in homily, then in visual imagery, and then in liturgy⁴⁰ deserves serious consideration: is this actually how cultural change works? It certainly looks as though, with slight modification, it works for the *study* of the Theotokos: first pictures, then literature, then liturgy. But in Byzantium the question needs further debate, which has only become possible now that texts on the Virgin are being looked at together, seriously and with literary intent. This volume has almost provided a literary counterpart to Vassilaki's rigorously exhaustive approach to the Virgin in Byzantine art. Almost, but not quite, since there are texts which still need to be edited, not least the *miracles* of the Virgin signalled by Jane Baun. More work on narrative, more on apocrypha, the successful completion of the Australian homily project, databases of dated Marian epithets: all of these are needed. And liturgy is the great uncharted territory which, as Nancy Ševčenko has shown us, can yield precious evidence for every day and every hour of the Byzantines' spiritual lives. But it is also clear that more work simply on hymns is necessary, dating the undated, and making sense of the apparently unique place of Romanos: so often in this volume he is seen as an exception (as in Shoemaker's 'landmark moment') or a catalyst (as in Cunningham's emergence of the Theotokos as a holy figure in her own right), but not treated in *his* own right. And there are other texts, such as the *Christos Paschon*,

³⁹ M.B. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven: Eighth-Century Byzantine Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood, NY, 2008). This complements the volume of translations on the Dormition homilies published by B. Daley, S.J., *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood NY, 1998).

⁴⁰ N. Tsironis, 'From poetry to liturgy: the cult of the Virgin in the Middle Byzantine era', in Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God*, 91–9, esp. 92.

which need thorough analysis, work on dating and authorship, work on the use of the source-texts and the performance context, before the Panagia as protagonist can shine out like the Theotokos at Torcello.

Research is a process which solves problems, refines questions, requires new research in turn before posing new problems, asking new questions and requiring new research, in turn to be solved, refined and produced. Yet it is not merely cyclical; there is a journey involved as well. This decade's work on the Theotokos has taken us from exhibition to study of iconography to the study of literary texts to the study of cult. *Yes, the Theotokos again, and again,* we hope, in future conferences, exhibitions and volumes. This volume has taken us a long way, and we salute its editors, who organised a fast-moving conference and have brought it safe home to harbour.

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